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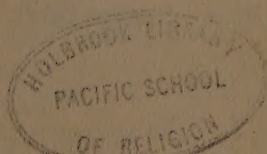
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# THE NEW TESTAMENT



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# THE NEW TESTAMENT



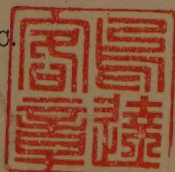
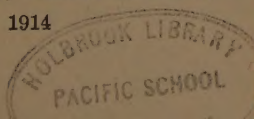
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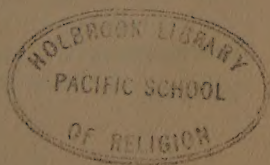
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## CHAPTER I

### THE SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH THE NEW TESTAMENT ORIGINATED

THE task which, in spite of great and manifest difficulties, we here set before us is to ascertain in what manner the books of the New Testament were written and developed, and how best to interpret their contents. Our first step must be to estimate the social and religious conditions in which the New Testament books originated.

The gospel appealed to the poor. First among the blessings announced by Jesus (*Luke* vi, 20) were consoling promises to the poor and the hungry. The Lord's Prayer asked for daily bread. John the Baptist told inquirers to give away clothes and food; to avoid exactions; and to refrain from violence and truculence. Jesus of Nazareth is portrayed as poor, and one of his pathetic sayings ran: "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the son of man hath not where to lay his head." And when we survey the Roman Empire at the period of the Christian origins, we have no difficulty in discovering a vast mass of poor people who would eagerly accept the story of God becoming a poor man who was born in a stable, who plied his trade as a carpenter, and who was crucified by Roman

## 2 ORIGIN OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

authorities. A small body of landowners held immense estates and troops of slaves, and were protected in their possessions by Roman law, soldiery, and fleet. In the second century B.C. a popular leader said of the Roman proletariat: "The wild beast has its cavern and den.....but those who are called the lords of the earth have nothing left but light and sunshine; there is not a stone that they can call their own, and lay their weary head to rest on." Slave-labour was often preferred to that of the so-called free workers, who were glad to receive corn from the public stores. Taxation was heavy in the provinces, where the publicans, or tax-contractors, would extort to the last farthing, and earn the hatred of the people. Debtors were harshly treated. Terrible was the penalty for slaves who rebelled; and when Spartacus and his fifty thousand fellow-slaves were defeated in the Servile War of 73-71 B.C., six thousand of the vanquished wretches were crucified along the Appian Way between Rome and Capua; and the Mary who stood beside the cross of Jesus was symbolic of many an unhappy mother in those days of blood and iron. Even slaves were cruel to slaves, and the "evil servant" of the parable (*Matt.* xxv) who, in drunken insolence, smote his fellow-slaves represented the worst class of foremen on great estates or in large households. Before passing from this hasty glimpse of Roman conditions, we may note the existence of the sodalities, or associations. Some of these were religious colleges, united in the worship of a special divine patron, and by fraternal ties which forbade any member to prosecute a brother-member. Or working men would combine for mutual aid in such "colleges,"

governed by a code of rules ; the funds were used for defraying the funeral expenses of subscribers ; and the members would assemble at suppers of bread, wine, and fish. These funeral clubs were naturally frequented by the poorer classes, while the richer associations intrigued politically, and aroused the suspicions of the authorities. Such societies, established for religious purposes by people who had to meet in humble rooms, and among whom almsgiving was both a piety and a necessity, might readily develop into the primitive type of church which, as Celsus observed in the second century C.E.,<sup>1</sup> was chiefly composed of tanners, cobblers, weavers, and the like social orders. A passage in one of the Pauline epistles (1 *Cor.* xi) depicts the somewhat unpolished manners of church members at their public table.

The Greeks had similar clubs. One form of club was the *thiasos*, devoted to this or that god, and holding sacrifices, festivals, and banquets ; while the *eranos* was a secular society or loan club. Women as well as men attended. We hear of a club at Cnidus, in Asia Minor, among whose members were a freeman, three foreign slaves, and a native slave, a significant mingling of the bond and free. But the most important ceremonial practice of the Greeks was that of the Eleusinian Mysteries. The festival was at first a worship of the earth, the seed, and of the glorious nature-powers that bring the seed from the dark womb of the soil to the light of day and the fullness of harvest. Earlier ages used the occasion for much eating and drinking, and sex-licence. After-ages

<sup>1</sup> C.E., Christian Era.

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refined it into a devout approach to divine presences, and meditation on the trials and triumph of the human soul. At first, only the men of Attica might participate ; later, all Greeks and all Romans, and women, were admitted ; and sometimes slaves were initiated. An opening proclamation enjoined that all who entered the festival must come with clean hands and prudent tongue ; and baptism in the sea, followed by fasting from certain kinds of food, symbolized this cleansing of the soul. Sacrifices were offered ; and a great procession of initiates, singing hymns and carrying flaming torches, marched from Athens to Eleusis. Torches were extinguished, and the hush of night fell on the multitude. Temple doors were opened amid a blaze of light, and the Illumined Ones, wreathed with myrtle, crowded into the building to witness a drama without dialogue, which portrayed the resurrection of the cornseed in springtime. In other forms, mystery dramas were practised in connection with the worship of the sun-god Mithra and other gods. Thus, the eastern area of the Roman Empire was familiar with religious associations which included in their procedure such incidents as initiation, baptism, the meal in common, and the parable drama. Nor can we omit to note the Mysteries which were celebrated under the divine patronage of Orpheus, and which, by means of ingenious and varied symbols, taught the doctrine of the passage of the human soul to re-incarnation. Orpheus stood for culture, for poetry, prophecy, and science ; and his magical music charmed the very beasts ; his seven-stringed lyre hinting at the music of the seven spheres.

In the same quarter of the world flourished the



religious groups who developed the doctrine of the secret Revelation or *Gnosis*, and who were known as the Gnostics. They elaborately mapped out the universe as zealously as modern scientists, and their system of the silent abyss, the Pleroma, or cosmic fullness, the Great Mother or Sophia (also known as the Virgin, or Helena), and the divine *Æons* or emanations which proceed from the One God, must have formed a body of difficult learning quite out of the reach of the common man, no matter how pious. In the Gnostic system, the Primal Man existed before the present world, and was embodied in many forms till he assumed that of Christ; but we must at once add that original Gnosticism regarded this Christ as an ideal figure, representative of the fact of human salvation, but not related to any historical man such as Jesus of Nazareth. Gnostic thought, in its many varieties, was constructed in Jewish, Egyptian, and Greek circles, and its central idea of salvation naturally brought it into touch with the popular salvation-doctrine that gathered round the person of Jesus.

A Jew of aristocratic birth, leisure, and culture, and acquainted with Greek philosophy as well as with the Hebrew Scriptures, was Philo of Alexandria (about 20 B.C. to 60 C.E.). In Philo's speculative thought, God expressed his divine nature and purpose through the Word, the Reason, or the Logos, of which the human soul is itself a part, being framed after the image of God. The Logos is light and nourishment, the bread of God, the milk from heaven, the root of virtue, the high-priest of the world, the intercessor, the Son of God, the shadow of God, the archangel, the dove of Noah, the fire of the burning bush, the manna of the

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desert, the rock whence Moses drew water, the pillar of fire, revealed in the personality of Moses the law-giver, and to be revealed again as a Messiah, ruler, and teacher.

For centuries a community of Essenes or healers had lived an ascetic and tranquil life in the region of the Dead Sea. They held the doctrines of God and of the soul's immortality. Dwelling in love and peace with all men, they tilled the soil, had a diet of bread and vegetables, kept the Sabbath, practised religion without priests, abjured marriage, abstained from animal sacrifice, had all things in common, considered all the members as equal in rank, and sought to attain the highest degree of purity which would enable them to heal the sick and raise the dead. Like to these people were the Therapeuts, who passed their time in pious exercises in Egyptian solitudes, and whose prayers, hymn-singing, cells, seventh-day meals of bread, salt and water, and sacred dancing are described by Philo in his treatise on the Contemplative Life. Such associations remind us of what we have learned later to call the puritanical element in human nature. Jewish history presents us with the two distinct types of the formalists and legalists on the one side, and the spontaneous and simple pietists on the other.

Not long before the rise of Christianity, the Jewish book of *Enoch* reveals a vision of the divine Son of Man who will destroy sinners and raise up the saints to glory. These saints, or righteous people, expressed their naïve and fervent religious feelings in the so-called *Psalms of Solomon*. "Sinners," cries one of these psalmists, "shall be taken away unto destruction, and

the memorial of them shall no more be found; but upon the saints is the mercy of the Lord." This Lord, or "Kurios," is three times, in the course of these songs, called the "Christ." "The king of the nations is the Lord Christ," runs one joyful affirmation. Other hymns of the period (Dr. Rendel Harris places them in the first century C.E.) are the so-called *Odes of Solomon*. One ode ascribes glory to "the Lord Messiah." Another describes the extension of the hands right and left in prayer as the sign of the Lord (that is, the attitude is that of a cross). In yet another, the devout singer exclaims: "Although a son of man, I was named the illuminate, the son of God.....and I became one of his neighbours." It is noteworthy that the term "chrestos" (excellent, good, etc.) has become implicated with that of Christian. When the historian Suetonius speaks of disturbances by Jews in Rome being fomented by "one Chrestus," some commentators accept the reference to Christ, while others find in it only an allusion to a leader of a sect of "Chrestoi." And Tertullian later observed that Christians were frequently called Chrestians.

Palestine, the Holy Land which was a little larger than modern Wales, looked towards Egypt, Greece, and Rome across the sea, and towards Syria, Persia, and India eastwards; and, exclusive as the Jews were in their religious thought and cult, their little land was traversed by lines of trade and other intercourse. It was governed by Romans; its ordinary language was Aramaic, though the sacred tongue was Hebrew; many of the upper classes understood Greek; the Greek games were celebrated at Jerusalem in the days of Herod; and multitudes of Greek and other proselytes came from

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far and near to the great festivals of the Temple of Jerusalem. In short, Palestine was open to many intellectual and social influences from without, just as the intense Hebrew religiousness affected the moral atmosphere of the Roman Empire. The dispersed Jews throughout the Greek and Roman world—collectively known to us as the Diaspora—formed close and well-organized communities in all the chief cities. Some were soldiers in the Roman armies, some were slaves or ex-slaves, some were traders, craftsmen, and professional men (not many at that period were moneylenders). Hence, the Jews had abundant opportunities of making known to Gentile neighbours the nature of their monotheistic faith, their Scriptures, and their religious customs. Naturally, Hebrew ideals contributed to the movement which resulted in Christianity.

A Jewish book, dating from the first century C.E., has come down to us in a Greek version, entitled the *Didache*, or Teaching; and it has the appearance of being a translation from the Hebrew. It was a manual of conduct-rules and doctrine for the use of "apostles," or preachers. The keynote is sounded in the opening words:—

Two ways there are, one of life and one of death; but there is a great difference between the two ways. The way of life, then, is this: first, thou shalt love the God who made thee; secondly, thy neighbour as thyself; and all things whatsoever thou wouldst not have befall thee, thou, too, do not to another.....Bless them that curse you, and pray for your enemies, and fast for them that persecute you.

After directions as to baptizing in cold or warm water, "into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," the *Our Father*

prayer is recited, and the rule is added, after the old Hebrew manner: "Three times in the day pray ye thus." Jewish writers claim that in such sentences as the following, which are scattered through their ancient literature, are embodied the prayers for Messiah's kingdom to come, and for the Divine protection; and the Christian "Lord's Prayer" may have had origin in Hebrew circles:—

Our Father, our King, disclose the glory of thy Kingdom unto us speedily.....Magnified and hallowed be the name of the supreme King of Kings in the worlds which he created, this world and the world to come, in accordance with his will.....Give us our appor-tioned bread.....Forgive thy neighbour the hurt that he hath done unto thee; so shall thy sins also be forgiven when thou prayest.....Never should a man bring him-self into temptation as David did, saying, Examine me, O Lord, and prove me.....[The idea of deliverance from evil is perpetual in the Psalms, etc.].....Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty.

The Eucharist, or Thanksgiving, is enjoined by the *Didache*, and cup and bread are thus acknowledged:—

We thank thee, our Father, for the holy vine of David thy servant, which thou hast made known to us through Jesus thy servant.

Here it is obvious a non-Jewish hand has introduced the reference to Jesus; and so in the thanks for bread:—

Just as this broken bread was scattered over the hills, and having been gathered together became one, so let thy ecclesia (Church) be gathered together from the ends of the earth into thy Kingdom; for thine is the glory and power through Jesus Christ.

An allusion to a weekly assembly of the pious on the Kyriak of the Lord, or Lord's Day of the Lord, has much puzzled the learned. Neither Jews nor

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Christians feel satisfied with the *Didache* as expressive of their orthodoxies. The Jewish groundwork has been overlaid with Christian additions, and the composition of the book may have in this way extended from about 50 C.E. to 120.

For some eighty years of the first century C.E. a wandering advocate of the doctrines of Pythagoras, named Apollonius, went barefoot over many eastern lands; and his vegetarian diet, linen garments, long hair, and vivid plain-dealing style of preaching furnished easy materials for a romance written by Philostratus more than a hundred years later. His philosophic studies in the neighbourhood of Tarsus, and his long pilgrimage in India, Babylonia, Egypt, Asia Minor, and Italy, suggest to us that the spectacle of travelling propagandists like Paul the Apostle was a familiar one in that period of religious inquiry and unrest.

As to the central figure of the Christian story, that of Jesus of Nazareth or the highly-theological "Christ" of the Pauline Epistles, common sense will neither object to the proposition that Jesus historically lived, nor the proposition that a divine Christ was a natural conception in an age so imaginative in the sphere of religion. No helpful material can be drawn from the confused traditions in the Talmudic literature concerning Jeschu (Jesus), the son of the soldier Joseph ben Pandera and Miriam, who was betrothed to Jochanan. Nor can any comprehensible view be made out of the tradition, retailed by the Christian author Epiphanius in the fourth century C.E., that Christ was born of the royal line of Judah, at Bethlehem of Judæa, in the days of Alexander and Salina—a date which goes back to 100 B.C.



The critical genius of Mr. J. M. Robertson has accumulated a mass of facts illustrating the belief of the ancients (and not only of the ancients) in the saving virtue brought to humanity by the sacrifice of God, or the Son of God. The tragic experience of death was very naturally transferred by early man to the Gods themselves; and the death of God was represented both by human victims, or by symbolic sacrifices of animals, or symbolic meals of bread (body) and wine (blood). A hint at such a symbolic human sacrifice occurs in the Gospel of *Matthew* (xxvii, 16, 17), which tells of a custom at Passover feast:—

The Governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would. And they had then a notable prisoner called Barabbas [the Christian father Origen calls the prisoner "Jesus Barabbas," and found this name in his version of *Matthew*]. Therefore, when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas [Jesus Barabbas], or Jesus which is called Christ?

"Jesus Barabbas" meant "Jesus the Son of the Father," and the name may have been the name of a human sacrifice in an old Syrian ritual, in which the victim personified the divine saviour. The "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," of which we have a striking vision in the Apocalypse (like the *Didache*, a Jewish book originally), is another form of the god-sacrifice. The divine blood and its efficacy for washing away a sinner's guilt was tangibly enough represented by the blood which dripped from slain bulls or rams upon devotees who lay in pits beneath the sacrifice—a religious practice in vogue in the Roman Empire. All over the Empire, and especially among soldiers, the worship of the sun-god Mithra was extending.

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This "rock-born" Mithra was adored in caves, or chambers resembling caves, and his sacred day was Sunday. At Christmas, the winter solstice, and at the spring equinox (the Easter of later times) his festivals were celebrated. In a dramatic rite the Mithraists mourned over a stone image, and laid it in a tomb; whence they drew it, amid a display of lights, as a token of the resurrection. Similar miracle-plays, if one may so term them, were enacted by the worshippers of the god Attis in Phrygia and the god Osiris in Egypt. Mithraism had its Mysteries, in the course of which bread and water were partaken sacramentally, holy marks were made on the foreheads of the "soldiers" (devotees), and swords and crowns were presented; and sometimes a lamb was killed in sacrifice. Mithraic ideas and practices were absorbed into the later Christian system, which did not, however, make use of the legend, so artistically embodied in old sculptures, of Mithra slaying the bull.

We have already seen how Mysteries, of various kinds, involved dramatic features. The theory broached by Mr. Robertson, and increasingly gaining acceptance, is that the early Christians followed this prevailing custom, and enacted the trial, condemnation, suffering, and death of Jesus in what moderns call a passion play. The word book, so to speak, of this Mystery play is preserved, if incompletely, in the closing portions of the Gospels of the New Testament. If, at one time, a "Jesus Barabbas," a Jesus Son of God, had been sacrificed as a symbol of the divine saviour, after previous crowning, mocking, and scourging, the evolution to milder manners would have changed this brutal rite into mimic scenes and

dialogue at which an eager crowd of pious people would assist ; and it is quite easy to see how such dramatic performances could be transmuted into the literary form familiar to us in the Gospels. To this interesting problem, however, we shall return in a future chapter.

Meanwhile we will set out, in a list which will need no detailed comment, some of the elements in the pre-Christian creeds which find resemblances in the Gospel story :—

The Virgin Birth. Greek faith regarded as virgins—Juno (Hera), who, though wife to Jupiter (Zeus), was thought to become a virgin again each year, and who, as a virgin, bore Vulcan (Hephæstus) ; Cybele, mother of the gods ; Leto, mother of Apollo and Artemis ; Demeter, the earth mother. Perseus was the son, by Zeus, of the virgin Danaë.

The mother of Adonis, the Syrian god who dies, was Myrrha.

Pan, the terror-striking god, led Jupiter "to the mountain which is called the Pillar of Heaven, whereupon he ascended it, and contemplated the lands afar."

Wine was miraculously produced at the festival of the god Dionysus at Elis, three empty flagons being placed in a sealed chamber overnight, and found full of wine in the morning. The god of the vine naturally presided over the change of watery sap into wine.

Poseidon, Greek god of the sea, walked on the waters.

The god Æsculapius gave sight to the blind.

The god Dionysus (the vine-god) found two

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asses, on one of which he rode to the Temple of Dodona. To the earlier Christian story of Christ riding on the ass Justin Martyr added the incident that the ass had been found tied to a vine.

The Roman god Janus bore keys and rod; he opened or closed the gates of war; he was two-faced. One here thinks of Peter.

In the Babylonian festival of the Sacæa a prisoner condemned to death was arrayed in royal robes, and afterwards stripped, scourged, and crucified.

The god Attis was symbolized by the pine tree. At the coming of spring a pine tree was ceremonially cut down, and his worshippers, with much show of grief, sought for him in woods and on the hills; and on the third or fourth day joyfully proclaimed his finding.

The seamless robe connected with the crucifixion story reminds us of the seamless chiton which Spartan women wove for the god Apollo, and of the indivisible robe of Osiris (that is, the robe of light).

Adonis ascended to heaven, as also did Herakles from the funeral pyre, and Dionysus with Ariadne.

Descents into hell were made by Orpheus in search of his wife, and by other gods.

Hermes was figured in ancient art as carrying a ram, foreshadowing the popular picture of the Good Shepherd.

To such examples should be added those which the New Testament writers themselves adduce. Thus *Matthew* tells of the virgin birth, and goes on to say:—

## ORIGIN OF THE NEW TESTAMENT 15

Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son. (The reference is to the prophet *Isaiah*.)

Many other New Testament passages carry out the thought that the Christian scheme of salvation adopted clues and types from the religion of the past, and "fulfilled" them.

On a papyrus leaf found at Oxyrhynchus, south of Cairo, Egypt, in 1897, are written in Greek an incomplete series of brief sayings of Jesus; and they are no doubt representative of many other maxims and teachings passed from mouth to mouth, and written in various forms. Here are examples of the Egyptian sayings:—

.....And then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.

Jesus saith, Except ye fast to the world, ye shall in no wise find the Kingdom of God, and except ye make the Sabbath a real Sabbath ye shall not see the Father.

Jesus saith, Wherever there are two, they are not without God, and wherever there is one alone, I say, I am with him. Raise the stone, and there thou shalt find me; cleave the wood, and there am I.

Other sayings were discovered in 1903. The expressions differ from texts on similar topics in the New Testament. Critics conjecture their date to be the second century; but it is obvious that such scattered sentences might spring from any point in the early Christian period.

## CHAPTER II

### SILENCES, TESTIMONIES, AND MANUSCRIPTS

WHAT do non-Biblical witnesses in the first century C.E. say about the Gospel story? Which important witnesses are silent? And in what form has the manuscript basis of the New Testament come down to us? These questions may be conveniently grouped together.

First, as to silences. The following men, more or less illustrious in the literary world of the Roman Empire, yield no testimony to the origin and progress of the Christian faith and practice: Seneca the moralist, born in the year 4, died 65; Petronius, keen observer of social manners, died about 66; the elder Pliny, an industrious collector of facts on natural history, 23-72; Juvenal, a satirist, 60-140; Martial, composer of epigrams, 40-102; Quintilian, writer on education and oratory, 35-95; Epictetus the Stoic philosopher, 40-120; Plutarch, historian, practical moralist, and commentator on religious beliefs, 45-120; Apion, an Alexandrian lecturer, 20-48; and we may add Suetonius, author of biographies of the Cæsars, 75-160.

Tacitus, the writer of Roman annals (born 55, died 120) and the younger Pliny (born 61, died after 105) make references to the Christian people.



Two Jewish writers do not give us information—namely, Philo of Alexandria (20 B.C.–60 C.E.), and Josephus, the historian, 37–101.

Much learned discussion has raged round the passage in which Tacitus relates how the Emperor Nero (in the year 64), in order to remove from himself the suspicion of setting fire to Rome, fell upon the people who were called Christians by the Roman crowd:—

To dispel suspicion Nero fastened upon and subjected to acute tortures, as a punishment for their great crimes, the people whom the common folk called Christians. Christ, the originator of that name, had been executed by the procurator, Pontius Pilate, in the reign of Tiberius. The miserable superstition, repressed for a time, broke out again, not only in Judæa, where it began, but also in Rome, where all bad and vile things collect and flourish. Out of the number first arrested, some confessed; and these, with a great multitude against whom they gave information, were condemned, not so much on account of the fire as because of their hatred of mankind in general. They were mocked even in their death; for some were clad in the skins of wild beasts, and torn to pieces by dogs; some were nailed to crosses; others burned to death; and, as dusk came on, some were lit [after being smeared with pitch] as torches. Nero lent his gardens for the show, and amused the crowd with circus games, dressed as a charioteer, and either mixing with the mob or driving a car. And, though the Christians were guilty and deserved their fate, they were commiserated; for they were sacrificed, not for the public advantage, but to satisfy the fury of one man.

The ordinary man will probably see no strong reason for rejecting this passage. An echo of the opinion here expressed is heard later in the pages of Suetonius, who speaks of the severe punishment inflicted by Nero upon the Christians—"a sect of men who professed a new and evil superstition." Suetonius also (as already noted) refers to dis-

turbances raised by Jews in Rome at the instigation of "Chrestus."

At the opening of the second century the younger Pliny, governor of Bithynia in Asia Minor, who corresponded with the Emperor Trajan, told him of difficulties experienced in dealing with Christians. Those who refused to offer wine and incense before the imperial statue were, if Asiatics, executed; if Roman citizens, sent for trial to Rome. Those who complied with the law of homage to the Emperor, and "reviled Christ," were set free. Two maidservants, who were called deaconesses, were examined by torture; but as to the inner practices of the sect, nothing more could be ascertained than that they formed a sort of fraternity, and vowed to abstain from theft, adultery, and contract-breaking. Pliny mentions that his drastic measures had increased the attendance at the temples, which had for a time been almost entirely deserted, owing to the enthusiasm for the Christian ideas among all ages and ranks.

Josephus describes religious movements among the Jews of his times, but says nothing of the Christian movement, and certain references were subsequently inserted in the text of his history, in order to fill in what seemed to Christian readers a singular omission; but these interpolations are not worth discussion.

If we can get over the difficulty that a booklet named *Clement's Epistle to the Corinthians* speaks of the "ancient Church" of Corinth, and nevertheless are willing to accept the date often claimed for it—namely, 96 C.E.—we may pause to observe its Christian allusions. It mentions no New Testament books, though it counsels the reader to --

Take up the epistle of the blessed Paul the Apostle. What wrote he first unto you in the beginning of the Gospel? Of a truth he charged you in the Spirit concerning himself and Cephas and Apollos, because that even then ye had made parties.

To soften the bitterness and jealousies of these contending parties in the Christian community, the writer quotes a variety of good maxims from the Old Testament, appeals to the example of the love of God and of "Jesus Christ our Lord," who gave blood, flesh, and life "for us, a peculiar people," and begs the brethren to remember "the words of the Lord Jesus," namely:—

Have mercy, that ye may receive mercy. Forgive, that it may be forgiven to you. As ye do, so shall it be done to you. As ye give, so shall it be given unto you. As ye judge, so shall ye be judged. As ye show kindness, so shall kindness be showed unto you. With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured withal to you.

The New Testament contains like teachings, but no passage in the form here quoted. Nor does the Roman writer (whose document is in Greek) give any details of the life of Jesus. Of Paul he says:—

After that he had been seven times in bonds, had been driven into exile, had been stoned, had preached in the East and in the West, he won the noble renown which was the reward of his faith, having taught righteousness unto the whole world, and having reached the farthest bounds of the West; and when he had borne his testimony before the rulers, he departed from the world and went unto the holy place.

Some critics place this epistle of *Clement* in the time of Trajan (112–117) or Hadrian (about 120), and Van Manen even dates it 140.

Writing in 1912, Sir F. G. Kenyon says that there then existed, of New Testament Greek manuscripts, 14 papyri, 168 uncials (large-letter writings),

## 20 SILENCES, TESTIMONIES, AND MSS.

and some 4,000 minuscules (or small-letter). Among writings on papyrus, a papyrus book-leaf found at Oxyrhynchus in 1896 by Messrs. Grenfell and Hunt contained verses of *Matthew* i, and the manuscript is said to date from the third century C.E. The uncial MSS., on vellum, appear first in the fourth century. To this century belongs the MS. known as the Vatican Codex, usually considered the oldest of the manuscripts; it does not contain *Hebrews*, the Pauline pastoral epistles, or the Apocalypse. All the New Testament is found, with other documents, in the Sinaitic Code, discovered by Tischendorf; it perhaps dates from the fourth century, and may have been written in Egypt. A fifth century MS. is the Alexandrian; when unmutilated, it embraced all the Old and New Testaments, with two Epistles of Clement and the Psalms of Solomon. Another fifth-century MS. is a palimpsest—that is, a manuscript written over with a fresh writing. In this case a treatise by St. Ephraem of Syria has been copied upon a Greek text which contains most of the New Testament books, but none complete. The Beza Code, of the fifth or sixth century, includes a Latin text with the Greek. Jerome produced the Latin text of the two Testaments known as the Vulgate. A Syrian MS. of the Four Gospels, found at Sinai, is supposed to have been penned in the fourth or fifth century. The Received Text—that is, the text familiar to the modern world—is thought to have been drawn up about 350 C.E. at Antioch in Syria. For two or three hundred years copies of New Testament writings circulated from hand to hand, were subject to accident and soiling, were copied with variations, and few people were likely, at that early

period (before the Antioch editing just referred to), to place great value upon this or that precise form of expression. Thus the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS. do not include the last twelve verses of *Mark* (beginning "Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week"). All the chief uncial MSS. omit the story of the woman taken in adultery (*John* viii, 1-11). For more than a thousand years Greek versions did not contain the verses of the epistle 1 *John* v, 7, 8:—

For there are three that bear record in heaven—the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth.

The Antioch revision, as scholars call the fourth century text, was drawn up in the interest of the general reader, who naturally had no leisure or wish to compare one manuscript with another. Hence, critics who want to get nearer to the origins of Christian thought have to travel farther back than the Antioch text, and study the varied documents which indicated the free religious thought of an age unrulèd by councils and literary censors.

It may be convenient for readers who follow discussions of the New Testament texts to note that the chief Greek MSS. are thus indicated:—

Vatican (preserved at Rome) = B.

Sinaitic (preserved at St. Petersburg) =  $\aleph$ .

Alexandrian (preserved at British Museum)  
= A.

Codex Ephraemi Syri (preserved at Paris)  
= C.

Beza (preserved at Cambridge) = D.

### CHAPTER III

#### PAUL AND PAULINISM

IN social, political, and religious movements one observes two tendencies—a tendency towards the plain, concrete method on the one hand, and the tendency towards the philosophic on the other. For example, the French Revolution produced men whose passionate interest was in exterminating aristocrats and royalties, and in figuring the genius of liberty as a *sans-culotte* with cap, pike, and musket; and it also produced thinkers like Condorcet, who saw in humanity a spirit that was capable of eternal progress. In nineteenth-century England, Liberalism meant to many simple minds the personality of Gladstone or Bright; to the more reflective it meant a doctrine of rights and the ideal democracy. So, in early Christianity, while the popular mind needed a story, vivid with the pathetic experiences of *Jesus*, born in a stable and crucified on Calvary, the more theological mind cast its religion into the form of a *Christ*, who represented a divine principle rather than a flesh-and-blood individuality. Perhaps Paul and Paulinism stood for this Christ-principle, while the Gospels (especially *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke*) stood for the Jesus-principle.

We have already seen in Philo of Alexandria a man to whom the Word (Logos) was a divine



principle which almost took concrete shape through the intensity and beauty of its character. The Word was light, milk, root, priest, intercessor, and the rest. In the same way, might not the conception of Christ be shaped into the image of a Son of Man, Son of God, Redeemer, High-priest, and Judge? In the same way, the divine principle was expressed by the Gnostics in the person of Sophia. For many years Jewish religious thought had been familiar with the image of Wisdom, daughter of God, who proclaimed her glory:—

He created me from the beginning before the world,  
and to the end I shall not fail. In the holy tabernacle  
I ministered before him, and so was I established in  
Sion.....turn unto me, ye that are desirous of me, and  
be ye filled with my produce (*Ecclesiasticus* xxiv, 9, 19).

In like ecstasy of imagination, the modern poet Wordsworth personifies duty:—

Stern daughter of the voice of God !  
O Duty ! if that name thou love,  
Who art a light to guide, a rod  
To check the erring and reprove.

If the Christ-idea is transfigured into some such person, as a symbol of the love that fulfils the law of God, and of the moral freedom that lives the pure life of the Spirit without dependence upon priestly rules and codes, it will be found to approach very near to the Christ of the Pauline epistles (*Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians*, and the Pastoral epistles, *Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*). We shall approach still nearer to the Pauline thought if we suppose that a good teacher, Jesus, was crucified at Jerusalem as a disturber of law, both Jewish and Roman, and was reported to have risen from the dead; if we suppose that it occurred to

certain religious minds, in the guise of a divine mystery revealed, that this Jesus was the Christ; and if we suppose that the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ was regarded as a token of a break with the old ecclesiastical code, and a proof that now at last, in the spirit of love and freedom, all Christ-followers might be brought near to God and made inheritors of the heavenly kingdom. But there are no other essentials. It was not essential that Paul should have known this Jesus personally; and, as a matter of fact, he never says he did. It was not essential that the details of the life of Jesus should be described; and, as a matter of fact, Paul never gives any, unless we accept the very doubtful passage on the subject of Jesus at the Supper (1 Cor. xi); and to the Pauline faith, any elaborate picture of Jesus was unnecessary. With the thought fixed on the need of the divine Logos manifesting itself so as to end the ancient *régime* of formalism and statutory devotions, and reconcile the soul of man to God in the spirit of filial piety and spontaneous service, the Pauline religion only asked that at some given moment a man should be chosen as the incarnation of heavenly grace and truth, and, by his painful death, symbolize the close of an epoch of moral bondage and unrest, and the opening of an epoch of peace and liberty. This Christ, raised to glory on the right hand of God, would reappear in a descent from heaven, and inaugurate the eternal home of the saints. In short, the emphasis of faith, hope, and love was on the divine Christ, the human Jesus being but the vehicle by which God's grace was revealed, for "it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell." No doubt, such a theory would ill content

the common mind. The people would demand a Christ, whose career could be picturesquely traced from an extraordinary virgin-birth at Bethlehem, through a surprising course of wonder-working to a dramatic trial, death, resurrection, and an ascension from the Mount of Olives. That story we shall discover in the Gospels, but not in the Pauline literature. The reader is invited, bearing in mind the Christ-theory just outlined, to examine the epistles for himself. Meanwhile a few salient passages may be cited here :—

My brethren, ye are become dead to the law by the body of Christ (*Rom.* vii, 4). The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death (viii, 2). Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth (x, 4). Love is the fulfilling of the law (xiii, 10).

We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory, which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory (1 *Cor.* ii, 7, 8). As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order; Christ the first fruits, afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father (xv, 22, 23, 24). He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. Wherefore, henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more (2 *Cor.* v, 15, 16).

They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with its affections and lusts (*Gal.* v, 24).

Being found in fashion as a man, he [Christ Jesus] humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (*Phil.* ii, 8).

Praying for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ (*Cor.* iv, 3).

These are typical Pauline expressions, and they show that attention is concentrated on the Christ-mystery, and not on the human personality of the Jesus in whom the mystery was embodied. Compare the following passages from the book of *Acts* :—

God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye [the Jews] have crucified, both Lord and Christ (ii, 36). Him [Jesus] hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a prince and a saviour (v, 31). This Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ (xvii, 3).

These declarations point to a Jesus whom God selects as the Christ. And we must note, in passing, that, in the New Testament Gospels, Jesus never explicitly says "I am the Christ."

It is of interest to observe that the Pauline epistles contain many Greek words and phrases which occur in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, a book originally written about 100 B.C. and translated into Greek. One of the patriarchs, Levi, says to his children, "Choose for yourselves either the light or the darkness; either the law of the Kyrios (Lord) or the works of Beliar (Satan)." And in 2 *Cor.* vi, 14, 15, we have: "What communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Beliar?" The writer of the epistles would find kindred ideals in the vision of the Messiah depicted by Levi:—

In his priesthood the Gentiles shall be multiplied in knowledge upon the earth, and enlightened through the grace of the Lord. In his priesthood shall sin come to an end, and the lawless shall cease to do evil. And he shall open the gates of paradise, and shall remove the threatening sword against Adam. And he shall give to the saints to eat from the tree of life, and the spirit of holiness shall be on them. And Beliar shall be bound by him.

Many critics closely examined the Pauline epistles

in the nineteenth century, and, for a considerable time, the opinion prevailed that at least four—namely, *Romans*, two to *Corinthians*, and *Galatians*—were the genuine work of the Apostle Paul. The studies of Professor W. van Manen and others resulted in the affirmation that not a single epistle in the New Testament can be rightly ascribed to that Christian pioneer; the chief reason being that the theology and church-organization portrayed in these documents displayed a development too mature and complex to have occurred before 64 C.E. (the date usually given for Paul's death).

The book of *Acts* does not always accord with the Pauline epistles, though it contains a long section on the youth, conversion, and travels of Paul. Nine of the twelve apostles are merely named, and little is said of two more, James and John. Even the casual reader notices such inconsistencies as in the versions of the story of Paul's vision of Christ near Damascus. His companions see the heavenly light and hear not the voice of Jesus; but in a second account hear the voice and see no one; and in a third Paul alone sees the light and hears the voice. While *Acts* tells of Paul circumcizing Timothy, the epistles oppose the circumcision of Christians. While *Acts* tells of Paul encouraging four men to shave their heads in a Nazarite vow, the epistles record his scorn for such legalist compliances. While *Acts* tells of Paul affirming that, as a Pharisee, he was being harassed on account of his belief in the resurrection, the epistles represent him as glorying only in the cross of Christ, and by no means stressing a Pharisaic doctrine as such. Remarkable also is the artificial doubling of the actions of Peter and Paul in *Acts*. Both apostles

open their mission by healing a lame man, heal many people in masses, raise the dead, work miracles of stern judgment, impart the Holy Ghost by laying on hands, escape supernaturally from prison, endure scourging, and refuse to be worshipped. A friendly motive towards the Romans is peculiarly evident all through; for instance, the first converts of Peter and Paul are Romans—Cornelius and Sergius Paulus. We form the impression that the writer (who, no doubt, also composed the *Luke* gospel) quite intentionally frames his story so as to present a certain harmoniousness—the early Christians are of one mind; Peter and Paul have similar careers; Christians and the Roman authorities have courteous relations; and even the dissentient Jews at Rome at least peaceably assemble to hear Paul's apology for his faith. The book of *Acts* may have been composed 130–150 C.E.

The author of *Acts* inserts in his book several passages from a log-book of Paul's journeys, recognizable by the use of the term "we." In these sections we see the missionary preacher sailing along the west coast of Asia Minor, kneeling on the beach at Tyre in prayer along with a group of men, women, and children, reaching Jerusalem, and afterwards voyaging, amid fair winds and foul, to Puteoli, and thence making his way on land to Rome. The Pauline epistles do not mention Tarsus, a city which lay between the Mediterranean sea and the Cilician mountains, and where Paul is said to have been born. Of his biography, it will suffice to record the chief episode—namely, that after abandoning the Jewish doctrines and observances, he joined the movement which he had once

opposed and harassed, and devoted a passionate religious energy to propagating the gospel of Christ through Asia Minor and Greece and in Rome. Nothing is said of his death in the New Testament.

Traditional accounts of Paul's life present a scheme somewhat as follows: Conversion in the year 35; first visit to Jerusalem, 38; various travels till the second visit to Jerusalem ("I went up by revelation," he says in *Gal. ii, 1*), 53; journey with alms for the poor to Jerusalem, 58; two years a prisoner in Cæsarea, 60; journey to Rome; death in 64. This would be thirty-four years after the supposed date of the death of Jesus, 30. The objectors to the genuineness of the Pauline epistles (that is, to Paul's authorship) aver that this period is too brief to have evolved so ripe a theology as we discover in the epistles, and so developed a constitution in the Christian churches.

When we examine the basis on which the above-given chronology rests, we observe that the important date is that of Paul's trial before Felix, in 58, and its resumption before the procurator Festus, in 60; for at this point we can fall back on Roman history. But the authority for the story of the trial is the book of *Acts*, which we have so much reason to suspect of unreliability, by reason of its methods of composition, its disagreement with the epistles, and its evident inclination for miracles. We have, in fact, no clear proof that the conversion of Paul took place in 36, or that his subsequent annals followed the course just outlined, or that he died in 64. As to doctrines and churches, we have already seen adequate indications of both having originated, however confusedly and faintly, in the times preceding the date which orthodoxy so long



assigned to the preaching of Jesus, 29–30 C.E. We must, indeed, resign ourselves to a great and regrettable ignorance as to the true history of Paul; but we may assume that, with certain deductions and modifications to be presently noted, he produced the main body of the so-called Pauline literature. Our simplest plan will be to consider the books briefly in, as near as possible, their New Testament order. And, first, the document called *Romans*.

Paul has often wished to visit the group of saints in Rome. Meanwhile he sends them these essays on the gospel of Christ, "which is the power of God to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek (Gentile)." It is possible, indeed, that Paul writes after the destruction of Jerusalem (70 C.E.), since he speaks (chap. xi) of the fall of the Jews, their "casting away," and the lopping-off of their branches. The concluding chapter is quite disjointed from the rest. It begins:—

I commend unto you Phœbe our sister, who is a deaconess of the church that is at Cenchreæ [a little place near Corinth] that ye receive her in the Lord, worthily of the saints.

And other such personal allusions follow, with references to "churches," an expression that does not occur in the earlier pages. We may take it, therefore, that this section has been transferred to *Romans* from some other Pauline papers. As to the central theme of the epistle, we consider it frank and simple, if only we can keep it clear of the cumbrous commentaries which both orthodoxy and heterodoxy have accumulated around its Pauline exposition.

God (so Paul reasoned) had at first revealed his

moral law to the Jews ; but mere humanity, even though it were the flesh and blood of the Chosen People, could not rise to the true spiritual purity. The divine nature must unite with the human, and this union would actualize the spiritual life. In the person of Jesus this union was first effected. Mere humanity came into conflict with divinity when men crucified Jesus ; but the resurrection of Jesus proved that God had done the indispensable thing for the establishment of the life of the spirit. That life was possible henceforward for all who would accept the new view of God, man, and righteousness. The old law was now quite unnecessary. The loyal and cheerful acceptance of the Gospel was in itself an adequate basis for the religious and brotherly life. The heavenly order was inaugurated, and Christ would reappear, and the kingdom of God would be manifested. Such is the Mystery which Paul had brooded over ; and God had sent him east and west with this rousing message of fraternity and freedom, and of the spiritual life which was now, for the first time, made hopeful and practicable ; and

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death (viii, 1, 2).

The reader may search the whole document, and, indeed, all the other Pauline documents ; and, despite variations of mood and statement, he will find this straightforward doctrine permeating the literature from end to end. Paul and those who sympathized with him would not dwell on elaborate details of the biography of Jesus, nor would they

ask for such details. The vital point was not the career of Jesus *as* a career. The vital point lay in the fact that the man Jesus—a man of blameless life—was declared, by the witness of his resurrection, to be the Son of God; that is, the specific and decisive centre of union of the human and divine natures. To the Pauline mind, an infinity of narratives of the doings and sayings of Jesus would add no value to this essential act of combination. The repeated argument of Paul was, that by the works of the law should no flesh be justified; and hence an account of the moral obediences of Jesus, viewed only as a good man, would contribute nothing to the solution of the great problem. It would, on the contrary, stultify the principle that Christ's purpose was to redeem humanity from the curse of the law; that is, the curse of preceptual and priestly morals. We know, of course, and we should expect, that masses of religious people would not rest content with such a theological system, no matter how earnestly preached by Paul or other missionaries. Not only did the majority of the Jews decline this Gospel. Many Christians, as Paul himself tells, were temperamentally averse from it. And the *vulgus*, the vast crowds of the Roman Empire who were being stirred by the Christian movement (or, if you will, the *Chrestian* movement; that is, the movement for a higher social righteousness), would eagerly desire a far more concrete Gospel. For them there naturally arose the vivid story of the virgin birth, the Sermon on the Mount, the feeding of the multitude, the drama of the Passion, Calvary, and Joseph of Arimathea's garden, the splendid climax of the Ascension and Pentecost, and the

stupendous assize of the Last Day. Our thesis, therefore, is not that of a Pauline creed which was slowly elaborated from a primitive religious romance of Jesus of Nazareth, but rather of a double and parallel movement, the result of a widespread and continuous agitation of thought and feeling in the Roman Empire; one movement focussing itself in doctrines and principles such as Paul's, the other revealing itself in parables, hero stories, and dramatic apocalypses. Modern Europe illustrates the action of the same two types of religious intellect and emotion; and the most religious country in the world, India, has for ages presented similar evolutions of popular love of the dramatic on the one hand, and of philosophic and ethical speculation on the other. No doubt Paul and his disciples would ask for a Jesus who, as a definite personage, a man and a citizen, would play the sublime part of the Son of God. If, years ago, in Palestine, a Jesus was slain, and reputed by entirely pious and enthusiastic people to have risen again, the case was met; and the reader who pauses in doubt as to whether Paul would or would not demand more than such a slender foundation of history may be invited to read with attention the complete series of the Pauline documents. Critics shrewdly suspect interpolations; for example, the episode of the Lord's Supper appears to be thrust into 1 *Corinthians* (chap. xi, 23-26). But we will not insist upon such considerations, reasonable as they may be. Take the received text, and judge how far Paul cared for evidence as understood by modern critical historians.

The city of Corinth, notable for its busy harbour, its games, and its Temple of Aphrodite, had its

group of saints, whose irregular manners and practices drew stern admonitions from Paul. He wrote at least two epistles to the *Corinthians*. In the first he upbraided the sectarian temper ("I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ"); sinners in the sex-life; unbrotherly litigants. He suggested that, in a world whose fashion was so transient, it was not seemly to worry about the moral value of circumcision, or to devote much anxious thought to the question of marrying or not marrying, or to debate whether idol-meat (meat offered in temples, and then placed on sale) should be eaten. Rather should the soul concentrate on the running of the race for the unfading crown. Loose customs at the religious meetings were rebuked—the unveiling of women, the disorderly mode of partaking of the Supper, the noisy and inarticulate shouting which was stupidly reckoned as a "gift" of tongues. In the midst of these reproaches he pauses to utter two eloquent meditations. One is the noble praise of charity:—

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

The other is the solemn poem of the grave:—

There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power.

The second epistle has many personal features, and there are sounds of mingled pride (he was caught up to paradise, and heard ineffable words) and of pathos;—

Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep. In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils of the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, there is that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

These graphic recollections appear to us to possess far more actuality than the ornamental biography given in the *Acts*; for example, the theatrical prison tale in *Acts* xvi, 25, 26:—

At midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God, and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken, and immediately all the doors were opened, etc.

There is some disorder in the text of the second epistle; for instance, chap. vi, 14, to vii, 1 (which the reader should examine), seems wedged into a discussion of Paul's history as an apostle. Again, chapters x to xiii—that is, the last four chapters, containing the story of suffering just quoted—does not run on easily after chap. ix. The tone greatly changes. One need not conclude that the section is not Paul's writing. Here, as elsewhere in these Pauline documents, a variety of messages and reflections penned by the great missionary may have been roughly stitched together, so to speak, and notes and letters of different dates may have been copied miscellaneously into one manuscript.

To the *Galatians* (in Asia Minor) Paul wrote a controversial pamphlet which marked the strong contrast between the (1) children of Hagar the

slave—that is, the formalists who slavishly followed the preceptual morality and religious time-tables of the Jewish group of the Christian community—and (2) the children of Sarah the freewoman—that is, the believers in the new Christ-spirit of liberty. Having vigorously, and with intense fervour of argument and expostulation, criticized the conservative doctrine of the value of rites, ceremonies, and pious rules, Paul exclaims, with the utmost emphasis :—

Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty : only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. This I say then, Walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

It is in vain to speculate as to the personalities of the men—Peter (Cephas ; or was Cephas another man ?), James the Lord's brother, and John, whom Paul scornfully combats in his religious polemic ; nor can we assign any except a purely conjectural date to this heated discussion on liberty and law. Whatever the character and history of these men, Paul imperiously set aside their authority, and vehemently maintained that only by a lively appreciation of the Christ—proved divine by his resurrection—could humanity be saved. “The just shall live by faith.” It was a conflict of temperaments and ideas ; a conflict that was repeated, in another phase, ages afterwards, in the struggle between Luther and Catholicism.

In passing, it may be noted that the documents just reviewed—namely, *Romans*, two *Corinthians*, and *Galatians*—were classified as undoubtedly authentic by F. C. Baur (died 1860), of Tübingen



University, while the Tübingen school of critics did not claim an equal genuineness for the other (reputed) Pauline compositions.

Colossus and Ephesus were cities in Asia Minor. The books known as *Colossians* and *Ephesians* present difficulties. The *Colossians* document was written in prison, and with the aid of a companion, as one sees from the opening and closing verses:—

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother.....The salutation by the hand of me, Paul. Remember my bonds.

If, with these circumstances in view, we imagine the old pioneer perturbed by the spread of Gnostic doctrines among his friends and followers; and if we conceive of him as picking up the Gnostic terms and applying them to Christ, as if to show that Christ offered all that was of value in Gnosticism, we arrive at a position perhaps represented in *Colossians*, and yet more so in *Ephesians*. For example, the Gnostics used such terms as Pleroma for the divine fullness, Gnosis for the divine revelation, and Sophia for the divine wisdom. Paul seizes upon these expressions, and, as it were, Christianizes them:—

It pleased the Father that in him [Christ] should the Pleroma dwell.....In Christ are hid all the treasures of the Sophia and the Gnosis.

In the *Ephesians* document the Gnostic expressions are even more abundant. The two epistles have certain qualities of diffuseness and laboriousness of phrase that might characterize the style of Paul the aged, or of Pauline disciples who filled out some of the great preacher's notes and reflections with theological thought of their own. It is in such passages as the following that we detect a kind of

easy and serene statement which comes unfamiliarly from the combative Paul who wrote *Galatians* :—

By revelation God made known unto me the mystery .....which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the spirit, that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, etc.

When, in the final chapter of *Ephesians*, we read the paternal injunctions—children are to obey, fathers are to admonish, servants are to minister in fear and trembling, and so on—we hardly recognize in these maxims the principle which made love and the spirit of Christ the essentials, and dispensed with the detailed regulations of the old Hebrew law. Nor does the allegory of the armour of light, ingeniously wrought though it is, seem to harmonize with the impulsive psychology of the Paul who thought of the spiritual life as the running of a race.

A Macedonian city gives its name to the book *Philippians*, in which we discover Paul a prisoner in “the Prætorium,” yet writing cheerfully and encouragingly, as when he breaks into the exclamation, “Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say, rejoice”; and again when he invokes “the peace of God which passeth all understanding.” A strenuous temper inspires the Christian prisoner :—

I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.....Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.....I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

In the *Thessalonians*, first epistle, Paul and two companions send consoling and fraternal messages

to the Christians who had been harassed by Hebrew opponents and also by fellow citizens. As to the Jews:—

They both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men, forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway, for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.

The last sentence would seem to refer to the terrific destruction of Jerusalem in 70; and the atmosphere of agitated expectation readily extends to the doctrine of Christ's return. This is no time for lightheartedness or careless sleep, and the children of the day must watch for the Lord's appearing. A homely and naïve passage in this epistle reveals Paul as labouring at a handicraft night and day, in order not to become a burden upon his friends in Thessalonica. In the second epistle to the *Thessalonians* occur peculiar repetitions of the first, as, for example, the writer again mentions his having worked night and day to avoid causing expense to others. And a curious warning is given that the Lord will not descend from heaven until a tremendous blasphemy has been consummated; a Lawless One is to seat himself in the Temple of God and claim divine attributes. Then the blast of God's mouth will annihilate the blasphemer. As if to silence doubters as to this singular apocalypse, a note at the close announces "the salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle; so I write." Here, indeed, one sees a fairly obvious process of making Paul responsible for views that would otherwise gain less respect.

Thus we pass to the stage, in the earlier years of the second century C.E., when many a humble

"ekklesia" (church) was only too ready to accept "epistles" which gave good counsel in the revered name of Paul; and so Paulinism created such documents as the so-called *Second Epistle to Timothy*; then *Titus*, and next *1 Timothy*; that is, the three *pastoral epistles*. The aim of the author (apparently a dweller in Asia Minor) was to edify the members of the Christian societies; and he would consider the use of Paul's name a worthy method of carrying on the master's influence for the upbuilding of the new faith.

It must be confessed that the first of these—namely, the *Second to Timothy*—apart from a few characteristics, has the air of a document of the real Paul. The characteristics that are doubtful are—the occurrence of forty-six words not appearing in the epistles already noticed, and the peculiarly bitter tone of the warning:—

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, etc. (iii, 1 f).

Nor is the insistence on the value of the "scriptures" quite in accordance with the theory of that Christian liberty which depends solely on the power of the spirit. But, for the rest, the impression is that of the old Pauline steadfastness and cheerfulness. The pioneer is in prison again, and he sends to Timothy counsel and requests. He asks for a forgotten cloak and for a packet of parchments, and he begs his colleague to come before winter. "The time of my departure is at hand," he says; and brightly adds, "I have fought a good fight." It is worth while to mark the curious allusion to certain controversialists who maintain that "the

resurrection is past already," as showing how the air was filled with jarring opinions on the most fundamental doctrines. Christian orthodoxy, in fact, was the result of agitating and conflicting processes of thought and many struggling varieties of temperament.

In the epistle to *Titus* we are conscious of a far duller atmosphere than that associated with *Romans* or *Galatians*. There is talk here of ordaining presbyters, and only such as have one wife, and of *episcopoi* (bishops) who are total abstainers from wine. Moral advice is dealt out to aged persons, to young persons, to servants, and the like. Scarcely anything in this short document recalls the fervid and individual Paul whom we have learned to admire, except the postscripts which refer to his friends and his intention to winter in Nicopolis in Macedonia.

In 1 *Timothy* we seem to travel yet farther into a time when the Christian *ekklesiæ* (church-groups) have official staffs of presbyters and bishops, and when, after the passing of such missionaries as Paul, the saints consume a good deal of energy in discussion of morals and doctrinal quibbles, and in debating heatedly with Gnostics. Such a passage as this on women hints very pointedly at difficulties:—

Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding, she shall be saved in childbearing, if she continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety: this a true saying. [ii, 11-15 and iii, 1. The reference to the "true saying" belongs to the argument about women.]

Several times the writer repeats the stern "This is a faithful saying"; and one detects the beginning of dogmatic teaching in the phrase and tone. A like emphasis on orthodoxy is seen in the description of a worthy pastor as one who is "nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine." Perhaps the chief interest of the epistle is in its witness to the clash of the Paulinist views with those of certain heretics. The writer is zealously angry with people who teach doctrines of devils, and advise both celibacy and the avoidance of this or that class of foods. At the end of the manual of regulations (for such the supposed epistle is) there is a final thrust at the Gnostic rivals:—

O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and the antitheses of the pseudo Gnosis.

These antitheses were the oppositions set up by Gnostic propagandists between the principles of Christ and the principles represented by the God of the Old Testament; and disputes on problems of this character were rife in the first half of the second century; and, of course, subsequently.

There seems no convincing objection to the genuineness of the small letter to *Philemon*, in which "Paul the aged" beseeches his friend Philemon to take back the runaway slave Onesimus as a Christian brother.

We have now closed our survey of the Pauline literature, and venture to remind the reader that the sketch of Christian thought which we have presented as Paul's, followed by certain Paulinist documents, proceeds on the assumption that the year 64 is not the correct date of Paul's death, but that he lived on considerably later.

About 165 there died in Rome a rich shipmaster, Marcion of Pontus, in Asia Minor, who had devoted many years of his life to spreading religious ideas which had kinship with the Gnosis system, and also with Paulinism. He had disciples in Italy, Asia Minor, and Syria. Frugality of life and (for the "Elect" class of saints) celibacy were among the rules he enjoined. Except the Pastoral epistles, he valued the Pauline documents; and this discrimination is a sign of a movement already begun towards sifting out texts as suitable or unsuitable for the use of the churches. Marcion wrote a work on *Antitheses*, in which he contrasts the good attributes of the God of the Christian system with the Demiurge (magistrate-God, whose function it was to create mankind) of the Old Testament. His criticisms are very drastic; for example, he censured the Demiurge for creating Adam and then allowing him to fall into sin. This Demiurge was the God of Matter, as distinguished from the Christian God, who had a supreme spiritual nature. When Christ came to earth, and assumed (or appeared to assume) a human body, the Demiurge did not recognize his divine quality, and caused his crucifixion. But Christ rose from the dead, and redeemed souls from the underworld, while Paul preached the Gospel far and wide among the living. Unfortunately, a "Gospel of the Lord," which Marcion is said to have known and used, has not yet been discovered.

With the Roman Stoic philosopher, Seneca (died 65 C.E.), Paul has been considered to show much affinity of thought. Paul compares the strenuous saint with an athlete; and Seneca says: "What blows do athletes receive in their face!



What blows all over their body! Yet they bear all the torture from thirst of glory. Let us also overcome all things, for our reward is not a crown or a palm-branch, or the trumpeter proclaiming silence for the announcement of our name, but virtue and strength of mind, and peace acquired ever after." The following are interesting parallels:—

*Paul*: "Overcome evil with good." *Seneca*: "Pertinacious goodness overcomes evil men."

*Paul*: "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." *Seneca*: "To obey God is liberty."

*Paul*: "Who among men knows the things of a man, save the spirit of the man which is in him?.....We received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things which are freely given to us by God." *Seneca*: "I have a better and a surer light whereby I can discern the true from the false. The mind discovers the good of the mind."

*Paul*: "There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond nor free; there is no male or female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." *Seneca*: "Virtue is barred to none; she is open to all, she receives all, she invites all, gentlefolk, freedmen, slaves, kings, exiles. ....Nature bids me assist men, and whether they be bond or free, whether gentlefolk or freedmen, whether they enjoy liberty as a right or as a friendly gift, what matter? Wherever a man is, there is room for doing good."

Obviously, Seneca and Paul, while framing their

world-conceptions on different plans, the one merely theistic, the other theistic-Christian, drew some of their ethical ideas from the same general thought of their age.

## CHAPTER IV

### WHENCE AND WHITHER? (APOCALYPSE)

THE religious movement of which Judaism and Christianity were phases produced a crude historical philosophy, which sought to show how God worked out a purpose from the creation, through sin, anarchy, and pain, to the great climax, still in the future, when the wicked and their wickedness should be destroyed, and the divine kingdom be established in righteousness and peace. We have come across such apocalyptic hints, simply enough sketched, in the Pauline document *Thessalonians*. A brief unveiling of the future occurs in a discourse by Jesus on the Mount of Olives (*Matt.* xxiv), and an elaborate pageantry of revelation is set out in the closing book of the New Testament, the *Apocalypse*. Naturally, in such literature the accent is placed by faith and hope chiefly on the future.

Within the Old Testament we have an apocalypse in the form of the visions of *Daniel*, a book written in the reign (175–164 B.C.) of the Syrian king, Antiochus Epiphanes, who roused the Jewish people to fury by placing a statue of Zeus in the Temple of Jerusalem. The visionary saw four empires arise—the lion-empire of Babylonia, the bear-empire of Media, the leopard-empire of Persia,

and the eleven-horned empire of Greece; and he saw the Ancient of Days (God) enthroned, and the death of the eleventh horn (Antiochus), and the coming-in of the everlasting dominion of the Son of Man, Messiah the prince.

External to the Old Testament, a considerable apocalyptic literature was composed by Jewish writers between 200 B.C. and the appearance of the New Testament *Apocalypse* at the end of the first century C.E. A very rapid glance will yield material of interest.

The Jewish book of *Enoch*, the portions of which were composed in the last two centuries B.C., reveals many things about evil angels, the temporary triumph of sin, the intervention of the divine Anointed One, or Son of Man, the doom of the wicked in the fiery abyss, and the opening of Paradise to the righteous. Enoch says:—

I saw One who had a head of days [the everlasting One], and his head was white like wool, and with him was another being, who had the appearance of a man, and his face was full of graciousness, like one of the holy angels. And I asked the angel who went with me and showed me all the hidden things, concerning that Son of Man, who he was, and whence he was, and why he went with the Head of Days. And he answered, and said unto me: This is the Son of Man who hath righteousness, with whom dwelleth righteousness, and who revealeth all the treasures of that which is hidden, because the Lord of spirits hath chosen him, and whose lot hath the pre-eminence before the Lord in uprightness for ever.....He shall put down the countenance of the strong, and shall fill them with shame; and darkness shall be their dwelling, and worms shall be their bed.

Words and ideas drawn from *Enoch* can be traced in the New Testament books of *Jude*, *Apocalypse*, *Acts*, *Romans*, etc. For example, the phrases "Lord of Lords, King of Kings," "Clothed in

white," "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord" (*Enoch* has "Blessed is the man who dies in righteousness"), etc.

In a previous chapter we have recorded Paul's acquaintance with the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, a work dating about 130 B.C. to 10 C.E. This book is the first in Jewish literature to speak of the home of the saints as the New Jerusalem, thus :—

And the saints shall rest in Eden, and in the New Jerusalem will the righteous rejoice, and it shall be unto the glory of God for ever.

A little later (7–30 C.E.) was written the *Assumption of Moses*, which describes the advent of the Heavenly One :—

The earth will tremble, to its confines will it be shaken ; and the high mountains will be made low, and the hills will be shaken and fall. And the horns of the sun will be broken, and he will be turned into darkness ; and the moon will not give her light, and be turned wholly into blood, and the circle of stars will be disturbed. [Compare *Matthew* xxiv, 29.]

The duration of the Messianic kingdom for one thousand years is described in the *Secrets of Enoch* (1–50 C.E.), and this appears to be the first emergence of the idea in religious literature.

With the *Apocalypse of Baruch* (50–90 C.E.) we arrive at Pauline times. Parts were composed before, and parts after, the destruction of Jerusalem, 70. It is peculiarly Pharisaic in its religious tone, and openly affirms that the just are saved by their works, and righteousness is by the law ; hence this document would have been antipathetic to Paul. The Messiah is expected :—

When the time of the advent of the Messiah is fulfilled, and he will return in glory, then all who have fallen asleep in hope of him shall rise again.

As Paul is not likely to have seen this book, both he and the author of *Baruch* may have had some common source, or some popularly debated problems, in mind when *Baruch* said: "If there were this life only, which here belongs to all men, nothing could be more bitter"; and Paul, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (1 *Cor.* xv, 19); and again, *Baruch*, "In what shape will those live who live in thy [God's] day?" and Paul, "Some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?"

The idea, so characteristic of the religious movement in 200 B.C. to 100 C.E., that an elect people is to be separated by divine grace from the midst of a wicked and anti-Messianic world, is vividly embodied in the New Testament *Apocalypse*; a book which, though published in Greek, was penned by a man who thought in Hebrew idioms and forms. The scene named occurs in chap. vii, and opens in these words:—

After these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God; and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed; and there were sealed a hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

The tribes are then enumerated, that of Dan being omitted; and we are reminded that, according to an old tradition, Dan had a suspected name because from this tribe would come forth Antichrist, or

Anti-messiah. The sealing protected the saints from the demonic terrors that were to ensue. A silence in heaven of half an hour followed, during which the prayers of the suffering saints on earth could be heard ascending to the altar of incense before the throne of God. If the sealing scene is a Jewish interpolation, which portrays the saved souls as members of the Hebrew tribes, a larger and more catholic conception may be observed in the next passage which tells of a multitude, innumerable, and clothed in white robes, washed in the blood of the Lamb.

The twentieth century critics attribute the book to the reign of the emperor Domitian (81-96 C.E.), but it is likely the visions were written at intervals, and Christian interpreters may have inserted references to Jesus—"the testimony of Jesus," "the faith of Jesus," "the martyrs of Jesus." Or even if we raise no question as to these phrases, we shall still find difficulties in framing a definite image of these disciples of Jesus. The messages to the Seven Churches—all in that region of Asia Minor which we have so often traversed in our study of Paulinism—give no clear indication of the doctrines held by the saints. Bitter enmity is expressed towards pretended "apostles," and pretended "Jews," and men who allow (as Paul allowed) the eating of idol-sacrifice meat. The deification of the Roman emperor roused a pious fury among these saints—Christians, or Jewish Christians. A measure which, to the Romans, was merely political—namely, the requirement of homage to the imperial statues, was regarded by the saints as blasphemy and the extremest sin. This Roman beast is symbolized in its worst



qualities by Nero, whose name, in Hebrew letters (the letters counting as numerals), yields the number 666. Roman authorities had punished with prison, and on occasion with death, refusal to worship the emperor's image, as type of Roman sovereignty. Antipas was apparently one of the martyrs (ii, 13). The *Apocalypse* answers Rome with the most terrible threats and curses; while, on the other hand, it comforts the saints with a forecast of the resurrection and Millennium:—

Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection. On such the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

If, like Paul, the writer of the *Apocalypse* believed that the death and resurrection of Jesus revealed the fact of the union of God and humanity, he is even more reticent than Paul in disclosing the character and teaching of this slain Lamb. When, in terms of a sun-myth, which depicts the divine child and its mother warring with the red dragon, he has cast out the Evil One, he recites the hymn of the victors; the hymn, nevertheless, is barren of moral ideals:—

Now is come salvation and strength, and the Kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night, and they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death. Therefore, rejoice ye heavens, etc. (xii, 10-12.)

Apocalyptic literature owes a very great debt to the researches of Dr. R. H. Charles, Canon of Westminster. A volume by him, presenting his latest interpretations of the *Book of Revelation*, is promised (we believe) for 1914 or 1915.

## CHAPTER V

### JESUS

WHEN a scholar like P. W. Schmiedel, after a long examination of the New Testament Gospels, has to discuss the question whether Jesus ever really existed, and when his evidence of this existence is the quotation of the following "absolutely credible passages" recording certain sayings and doings, we become aware of the difficulty of the whole problem :—

"Why callest thou me good? None is good save God only." (*Mark* x, 17.)

"Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven, and whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him." (*Matt.* xii, 31, 32.)

"And when his friends heard it, they went out to lay hold on him; for they said, He is beside himself." (*Mark* iii, 21.)

"Of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." (*Mark* xiii, 32.)

"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (*Mark* xv, 34.)

"There shall no sign be given unto this generation." (*Mark* viii, 12.)

"And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. And he marvelled because of their unbelief." (*Mark* vi, 5, 6.)

"When I brake the five loaves among the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve.....And he said unto

them, Do ye not yet understand?" (*Mark* vii, 19-21.) Here *Matthew*, xvi, 12, adds: "Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees." [Schmiedel supposes that the "Feeding of the Five Thousand" was a parable, not a happening.]

To John the Baptist's inquiry whether Jesus was "he that should come," Jesus replies: "The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them." [Schmiedel's view is that the healings are spiritual and moral only, and such healings are all effected by "preaching the Gospel to the poor"; in other words, Jesus gave no "signs."]

This series of sayings and doings represents Jesus as avoiding extraordinary claims, and being regarded by his friends as subject to illusions. His birth was homely, his conditions were homely, his companions were homely, and the circle within which his preaching was carried on was very restricted. If we imagine a preaching friar (if the modern term may be used), possessing some of the qualities of a Francis of Assisi, teaching a simple but direct and fervent ethics, feeling (as Socrates felt) a divine impulse within the heart, convinced that God had sent him, as the Son of Man, to announce the near coming of the Kingdom, and so agitating crowds of naïve peasants that, as a disturber of the peace, he was apprehended and put to death by the Romans, we shall have imagined nothing incredible; indeed, we shall have imagined a situation and career less extravagant in sensation and romance than many an episode guaranteed by sober history. At the very outset of the preaching the Son of Man raises the cry that the Kingdom of God is at hand. At the parting supper he says he will next drink wine with his friends in the Kingdom of the Father. Some that stand here, he affirms one day, shall not

taste of death till they see the Kingdom of God. His daily prayer is for the advent of the Father's Kingdom.

When such a man died, the religious enthusiasm which drew people after his strong personality would not necessarily lapse into despair or disillusion. They who loved him might reason that he could not really die; that, though dead by material tests, he must, as the Son of Man, live on in spiritual form, and must assuredly return in triumph. There was divinity in his words and in his heroic bearing; and what was divine was immortal.

The present age, which has learned to appreciate the imaginative qualities associated with folklore and legend-making, will not be surprised that, on so natural a basis, a passionately religious time like the time of Paul and the visionary writer of the *Apocalypse* should construct an ideal and invest it with miracle and glory. That ideal was the Jesus of the Gospels.

## CHAPTER VI

### BEFORE AND AFTER THE GOSPELS

OCCASIONALLY, in preceding pages, we have stated parallels between New Testament expressions and expressions in pre-New Testament literature. Examples will now be adduced of such language-parallels specially in the four Gospels; and then we will briefly note references, or alleged references, to these Gospels in second-century authors. There is hardly need to draw attention to the many quotations avowedly made by the Gospels from the Old Testament.

#### (1) BEFORE

In chronological order, beginning with *Enoch* (second century and first century B.C.), we may record the following examples of parallelism:—

*Book of Enoch*.—"The sum of judgment was given unto the Son of Man" (*John* v, 22: "He hath committed all judgment unto the son"). "The Elect One" (*Luke* ix, 35: "This is my son, the Elect One"—so the text should read). "When they see that Son of Man sitting on the throne of his glory" (*Matt.* xix, 28: "When the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory"). "Inherit eternal life" (*Matt.* xix, 29: "Inherit eternal life"). "Chains prepared for the hosts of Azazel" (*Matt.* xix, 41: "Prepared for the devil and his angels").

*Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs.*—"Love the Lord through all your life, and one another with a true heart" (*Matt.* xxii, 37-39: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.....thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself"; here, as in the *Testaments*, the two duties are combined in one command). "Tender mercy" (*Luke* i, 78: same expression in Greek). "The light of the law which was given to lighten every man" (*John* i, 9: "The true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world").

*Psalms of Solomon.*—"God their Saviour"; "The mercy of the Lord is upon them that love him"; "Blessed is the Lord"; "Salvation"; "Righteous and holy"; "That bringeth good tidings"; "Christ the Lord"; "The salvation of the Lord," etc. (Similar expressions are found in the songs of Mary, Zacharias, and Simeon, *Luke* i and ii).

*Odes of Solomon.*—"There is nothing that is without the Lord; for he was before anything came into being; and the worlds were made by his word" (*John* i, 2, 3: "The word was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made.")

*Assumption of Moses.*—A parallel relating to the darkening of the sun has been previously quoted. Another phrase runs: "A second visitation and wrath, such as has not befallen them from the beginning until that time" (*Matt.* xxiv, 21: "Tribulation, such as was not from the beginning of the world to this time").

*Apocalypse of Baruch.*—"Lo, the heavens were opened" (*Matt.* iii, 16). "Blessed is he who was not born, or being born has died" (*Matt.* xxvi, 24: "It had been good for that man if he had not

been born"). "That lightning [Messianic] shone exceedingly to illuminate the whole earth" (*Matt.* xxiv, 27: "For as the lightning.....so shall be the coming of the Son of Man"). "My redemption has drawn nigh" (*Luke* xxi, 28: "Your redemption draweth nigh"). "For what then have men lost their life, and for what have those who were on earth exchanged their soul?" (*Matt.* xvi, 26: "What shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?") Dr. Charles thinks that either *Baruch* borrows here from the New Testament, or that both drew the thought from a common source).

Such parallels point to more than the simple conclusion that the writers of the Gospels were familiar with Jewish writings outside the Old Testament. They show that the Christian documents were naturally evolved from a previous universe of ideas and language. When Jesus openly says he is the rejected stone, and quotes a Biblical psalm, "The stone which the builders refused is become the head of the corner," the adaptation of ancient conceptions to the Christian order is clear, and, so to speak, official. But in the cases above cited there is no reference to *Enoch* and the other pre-Christian books; and the effect is as if the writers of the Gospels, while publishing their evangel as a revelation, are all the time, and perhaps unconsciously, reproducing words and conceptions derived from ordinary and popular sources that lay ready to hand. This is not to say the Gospels present nothing new, but it reduces the traditional and exaggerated estimate of their newness.



## (2) AFTER

We ask next what kind of testimony to the existence of the New Testament Gospels is afforded by non-Biblical literature in the second century C.E.

The Oxyrhynchus document has been already quoted (p. 15).

The *Clement* epistle, doubtfully assigned to 96 C.E., or as late as 120, in addition to sentences already cited (p. 19), has the passage: "Remember the words of Jesus our Lord, how he said, Woe unto that man. It were well for him if he had not been born, rather than that he should cause to stumble one of my elect. It were better for him that a mill-stone were put round him, and that he were sunk in the sea, than that he should pervert one of my elect." This passage is a parallel with *Mark* ix, 42, and *Mark* xiv, 21. It may be taken from a collection of Christian "sayings," not necessarily the New Testament; nor can any of the references in *Clement* be definitely traced to the four Gospels.

In the *Didache* (about 50 to 120 C.E.) occurs the Lord's Prayer, and an allusion to the Lord's Day; but neither these nor other passages can be regarded as borrowings from the New Testament.

An epistle named *Barnabas*, and belonging to the early second century, recites the well-known sentence, "Many are called, but few chosen," and prefaces it with the phrase, "as it is written." The writer uses a similar reference when quoting from *Enoch*, a book which he reckons as "Scripture"; and the claim that he is taking the verse from *Matt.* xxii, 14, is not valid. It is worthy of remark that the epistle contains expressions such as occur in *John*; for example, Christ and the

serpent are associated; the piercing of Christ is mentioned; and the cross is connected with water and blood. The date of *Barnabas* may lie between 120 and 130.

In the course of epistles by *Ignatius* (the earlier forms of which may be dated the middle of the second century) likenesses to the New Testament may be observed. Unfortunately, of fifteen Ignatian epistles, eight are rated as unauthentic by all critics; and, of the other seven, the versions vary, there being a very brief version of three in Syriac, and a shorter and a longer version in Greek of all. Ignatius himself is a vague figure, of whose supposed martyrdom at Rome nothing definite can be ascertained. No New Testament Gospel is named in any of the versions. Similarities with the language of *Matthew* are noticeable. For example: "Be wise as the serpent in everything, and innocent with respect to those things which are requisite, even as the dove" (*Matt.* x, 16: "Be ye, therefore, wise as serpents, and innocent as doves"); again: "He that receiveth it, let him receive it" (*Matt.* xix, 12: "He that is able to receive it, let him receive it"). In any case, such passages are not word for word the same as in the New Testament, and they merely have that general resemblance which we have studied in the parallels between the New Testament and earlier literature. In passing, however, we may remark interesting features in the Ignatian documents. For instance: a statement that "there was concealed from the Ruler of this World the virginity of Mary and the birth of Our Lord." Another point deserving note is the energetic protest of the writer against the heresy of those who teach that Jesus only seemed to be born to eat, to

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drink, to suffer, to rise from the dead ; in other words, that Jesus appeared on earth as a phantasmal, though divine, personality.

When the document known as *Polycarp's Epistle to the Philippians* is found to refer to the ungenuine eight Ignatian epistles just spoken of, we feel how unreliable such a source is likely to be. Whatever its date, its contents indicate efforts to build up the membership and ethical life of the Christian societies, and to protect them from rival creeds. "First-born of Satan" is the epithet fastened upon such controversialists as say there is neither a resurrection nor a judgment. In a section which gives moral counsel is included the following: "Being mindful of what the Lord said in his teaching, 'Judge not, that ye be not judged'; 'Forgive, and it shall be forgiven unto you'; 'Be merciful, that ye may obtain mercy'; 'With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again'; and once more, 'Blessed are the poor, and those that are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of God.'" This series of maxims has a kinship with a number of scattered maxims in *Matthew*, but the document makes no mention of that source.

Only from a few citations made long afterwards do we know anything of the works of the Phrygian Christian *Papias*, who may have died about 160-70, and who wrote an *Exegesis of the Lord's Logia*. At the beginning of this exposition he stated: "I shall not hesitate also to set beside any interpretations all that I rightly learned from the presbyters, and rightly remembered, earnestly testifying to their truth; for I was not, like the multitude, taking pleasure in those that speak much, but in those who teach the truth; nor in those who relate alien

commandments, but in those who record those delivered by the Lord to the faith, and which come from the truth itself. If it happened that anyone came who had followed the presbyters, I inquired minutely after the words of the presbyters, what Andrew or what Peter said, or what Philip or what Thomas or James, or what John or Matthew, or what any other of the disciples of the Lord, and what Aristion and the presbyter John, the disciples of the Lord, say. For I held that what was to be derived from books did not so profit one as that from the living and abiding voice." Here, then, we have a Christian inquirer who puts a higher value upon oral tradition than upon documents. His account of *Mark* runs thus: "This also the presbyter said: Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote accurately whatever he remembered, though he did not arrange in order the things which were either said or done by Christ. For he neither heard the Lord, nor followed him; but afterwards, as I said, accompanied Peter, who adapted his teaching to the occasion, and not as making a consecutive record of the Lord's Logia. Mark, therefore, committed no error in thus writing down some things as he remembered them. For of one point he was careful, to omit none of the things which he heard, and not to narrate any of them falsely." About this paragraph from Papias criticism has held debate for many years. The plain man, in search of reasonably clear evidence, cannot see in it any solid proof that Papias was acquainted with the document known in the New Testament as *Mark*. Still more dispute has raged round Papias's words as to *Matthew*: "Matthew composed the logia in the Hebrew dialect, and each man inter-

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preted them as he was able." The reader will perhaps conclude that these casual allusions by Papias are not worth the emphasis so often laid upon them by students of Christian origins. It should be added that Papias does not speak of the *Luke* or *John* documents.

No copy is extant of "the Gospel" or "the Gospel of the Lord" which *Marcion* accepted, nor does *Marcion* (in any quotation made from him) mention any of the New Testament Gospels.

About 150 *Justin Martyr* was writing on the Christian side; and his two essays called *Apologies*, and his long *Dialogue* with the Jew *Trypho* (whom he is supposed to dispute with at *Ephesus*), contain references to those "who have recorded all that concerns our Saviour Jesus Christ," and to "the *Memoirs* called *Gospels*," and "*Memoirs* of the *Apostles*"; but he never names the New Testament Gospels. Much labour has been expended in comparisons of *Justin's* citations of the *Memoirs* with similar passages in the Four Gospels. The general result is to show that, while he employs phrases and sentences that appear to echo thoughts from *John*, or that very closely follow *Matthew* and *Luke*, he may all the time be using traditions or documents outside those New Testament sources. Nobody imagines that the Four Gospels embrace the total information available for the early Christians. If *Justin* does not specifically point to any of these four scriptures, and if his quotations from the "*Memoirs*" do not regularly tally with the text of the New Testament, it is open to us to conclude that he drew his material from that considerable mass of popular speech, of manuscripts passed from hand to hand, and of formulæ used by teachers in

the catechisms of synagogues and church societies, which existed independently of the Four Gospels afterwards recognized as the official scriptures of the Church. A few illustrations of parallelism and variations may be given :—

Justin's story of the birth of Jesus tells how Joseph searched for a lodging and found "a certain cave near the village"; an incident of which the Four Gospels know nothing.

Justin relates that, at Jesus's baptism in the Jordan, fire was kindled in the river; of this the Four Gospels say no word.

Justin's version of the mocking challenge of the bystanders at the crucifixion is: "He declared himself the Son of God; let him come down; let him walk about; let God save him." The language is different in *Matthew*.

The saying, "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire," is alike in Justin and *Matt.* vii, 19; and so also the saying, "Except your righteousness shall exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven," is alike in Justin and *Matt.* v, 20.

But the great majority of the parallelisms show divergence from exact likeness; and yet, as we have just seen, precise likeness was possible in two cases. It has been conjectured that Justin quotes a Gospel, the text of which is only known to us in fragments, called (correctly or incorrectly) "the Gospel according to the Hebrews." As to the Gospel *John*, the chief parallel runs thus:—*Justin*: "For the Christ also said, Unless ye be born again, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of

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heaven. Now that it is impossible for those who have once been born to go into the matrices of their parents is evident to all." *John* iii, 3-5: "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born? Jesus answered: Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." Seven or eight variations in the original Greek phrases occur.

The Italian historian, Muratori (eighteenth century), found an incomplete Latin document (*Muratorian Fragment*), badly spelled, and which may have been jotted down about 190-200; and this names *Luke* as the Third Gospel, and speaks of Luke as "that physician, after the ascension of Christ when Paul took him with him [the notes are confused] wrote it in his name as he deemed best in his own opinion, nevertheless he had not himself seen the Lord in the flesh," etc. The document speaks of *John* as the writer of the Fourth Gospel, and calls him "one of the disciples." Two supposed epistles by Paul are named and rejected. The Fragment catalogues thirteen epistles by Paul, as in the New Testament, says nothing of the Epistle to the Hebrews, or of the two epistles of Peter, or of James; and it accepts the Apocalypse which we know in the New Testament, and also the "Apocalypse of Peter."

The Assyrian Tatian was a disciple of Justin Martyr, and a member of a vegetarian sect of Self-controllers or Encratites. Between 150-180 he



was writing on the Christian side, and his *Diatessaron* ("By four") was a combination of four gospels; but we have no quite authentic copy of his original work. It seems clear that, in his combination of the four texts, he included *John*, for the version preserved in Arabic opens with the first verses of *John*: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word itself is God," and so on; and like quotations follow.

About 185 *Irenæus*, a native of Asia Minor, who lived and preached as a Christian in Gaul, declares that there was now a general consensus: "the churches which have been planted in Germany do not believe or hand down anything different, nor do those in Spain, nor those in Gaul, nor those in the East, nor those in Egypt, nor those in Libya, nor those which are established in the central region of the world." He accounts *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke*, and *John* as the true Gospels, and enthusiastically affirms: "It is not possible that the Gospels can be either more or fewer in number than they are. For, since there are four zones of the world in which we live, and four principal worlds, while the Church is scattered throughout all the world, and the pillar and ground of the Church is the gospel and the spirit of life, it is fitting that she should have four pillars." *Irenæus* explains that *John* was written in opposition to the doctrines of certain sects, that *Mark* repeats what Peter was in the habit of preaching, and that *Luke* reproduced Paul's views.

At this point, both as students and citizens, we ought to express our gratitude for the labour devoted to the subject of the present chapter by the late W. R. Cassels. His *Supernatural Religion*,

the publication of which began in 1874, was the first English work, of a systematic and scholarly character, to examine the historical position of the Four Gospels, and to set out the problem in a readable and yet accurate manner. Bishop J. B. Lightfoot, of Durham, energetically raised a church alarm, and ably resisted the author of *Supernatural Religion* with all the resources of the orthodoxy of that period. But Mr. Cassels's main conclusions remain unshaken to-day.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE FOUR GOSPELS—I. THREE SYNOPTICS; II. JOHN

AS there is a general likeness in the first three Gospels, and they pursue similar courses in portraying the career and teachings of Jesus, the Son of Man and martyr of Jerusalem, they are said to take a common view or synopsis of the life of the prophet, and are hence called Synoptics. The words of Jesus and the biographies they present in this consensus appear to constitute a Common or Triple Tradition; that is, they look as if all three had derived materials from a common source which is non-existent, but the nature of which may be conjectured. The *John* Gospel belongs to another universe of thought. It has no parables; no story of the baptism of Jesus; no narrative of his Temptation in the wilderness; the Roman soldiers fall down before him when attempting to arrest him; he may not be touched after his resurrection by Mary Magdalene, nor does he taste food, and he can pass through closed doors; this Gospel alone tells of the extraordinary raising of Lazarus from the dead; and it alone preaches the Logos ideal—that is, the ideal of Jesus as the Eternal Divine Word. We therefore divide our short study into two parts, one dealing with the Synoptics, the other with the Fourth Gospel. Before passing on,

it is worth while to recall Professor F. C. Burkitt's striking remarks to the effect that, out of a possible four hundred days occupied by Christ's ministry, not more than forty are in any degree reported in the Four Gospels, and that the whole of the Gospel speeches of Jesus could be pronounced, with deliberation, in less than six hours.

### I. THE SYNOPTICS

Of the Synoptics, *Mark* is the shortest; its Greek is the least polished; it gives no account of the birth, childhood, or resurrection of Christ (the last twelve verses in the Received Text being an addition); and modern criticism strongly inclines to the decision that *Matthew* and *Luke* used *Mark* or some document which we may call *Older-Mark* (the Germans say "Ur-Marcus"), as well as some other document unknown, and which is often referred to as Q (German "Quelle" or Source); and possibly more than one such other document. Hence we detect the Triple Tradition, for the clear exposition of which the English-speaking public is so much indebted to Dr. E. A. Abbott.

An example of the threefold tradition, in which the words common to all three documents are printed in italics, may be adduced from the episode of the conversation of Jesus with his disciples as to his mission:—

"Mark":—

*He asked his disciples, saying unto them, Who do men say that I am? And they told him, saying, John the Baptist, and others, Elijah; but others, One of the prophets. And he asked them, But who say ye that I am? Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ. And he charged them that they should tell no man of him, And he began to teach them, that the Son*

of Man *must suffer many things*, and be rejected by the elders, and the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

“Matthew” :—

*He asked his disciples, saying, Who do men say that the Son of Man is? And they said, Some say John the Baptist; some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But who say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. Then charged he the disciples that they should tell no man that he was the Christ. From that time began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up.*

“Luke” :—

*He asked them, saying, Who do the multitudes say that I am? And they answering said, John the Baptist; but others say, Elijah; and others, that one of the old prophets is risen again. And he said unto them, But who say ye that I am? And Peter answering said, The Christ of God. But he charged them, and commanded them to tell this to no man; saying, The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up.*

Of course, the reader will bear in mind that the identities of language spoken of are to be traced first in the Greek versions, but they are adequately visible in the English. Very many pages might be filled with similar instances. Whenever both *Matthew* and *Luke* contain the same story or speech, it is usually to be discovered in *Mark*.

At times *Matthew* and *Luke* show special likenesses of their own, in passages that have nothing in common with *Mark*. For instance, John the Baptist says of the coming Christ :—

Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly

cleanse his threshing-floor ; and he will gather his wheat into the garner, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.—*Matt.*, iii, 12 ; and *Luke*, iii, 17.

Or take this reference to the blind leading the blind :—

They are blind guides ; and if the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit.—*Matt.*, xv, 14 ; and see *Luke*, vi, 39.

In these and many other cases the two Gospels embody material which is not found in the Gospel of *Mark*. It would seem as if *Matthew* and *Luke* drew many of their facts from *Mark*, or from some version of that Gospel not very different from that which we now possess ; and that they also drew from another source which has never come to our knowledge. In other words, these two Gospels evince marks of a literary process. The two writers examined, sifted, and modified documents which lay before them.

We proceed to brief descriptions of the characteristics of each of the three Synoptics :—

(1) *Mark*.—We have already named the chief characteristics, and may now add a few illustrations.

People brought to Jesus (so this second Gospel says) all that were sick, and he healed many. Yet the other Synoptists use a more positive language, and assert that Jesus healed all. In another story Jesus is represented as healing a blind man by anointing his eyes with moist clay ; but in the course of the process he looks up to heaven and sighs—a graphic note which suggests difficulty in the effort to cure. Again, Jesus employs the words of self-depreciation when he replies to an admirer : “ Why callest thou me good ? ” And so in other

cases, which the reader should discover by an attentive examination.

Picturesqueness of details attests the quite popular quality of the document. Observe, for example, such phrases as: "All the city was gathered together at the door"; "He spake to his disciples that a little boat should wait on him because of the crowd, lest they should throng him"; the Gadarene swine numbered "about two thousand"; the grass on which the multitude sat was "green"; and so forth. The writer explains Aramaic expressions, as if knowing his book will circulate among non-Jewish readers; thus, when Jesus calls to the dead girl, "Talitha cumi," the interpretation is added, "Damsel, arise." Again, when Jesus speaks of a woman putting away her husband and marrying another man, and so committing adultery, he is using an illustration from Roman or Greek law, for the Jewish law gave no such liberty of action to the woman.

The true close of this Gospel is apparently at chapter xvi, 8. Women go to the tomb, find the stone rolled back from the entrance, and hear from a white-robed young man that Jesus is risen:—

Be not amazed; ye seek Jesus, the Nazarene, which hath been crucified; he is risen; he is not here; behold, the place where they laid him! But go, tell his disciples and Peter, He goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him, as he said unto you. And they went out, and fled from the tomb: for trembling and astonishment had come upon them; for they were afraid.

The two oldest MSS. of the New Testament end the Gospel at this significant point. One version adds (instead of the twelve verses which occur in our Received Text):—



And all that had been enjoined on them they reported briefly to the companions of Peter. And after these things Jesus himself from the east even to the west sent forth by them the holy and incorruptible preaching of eternal salvation.

In these variations of text we have a reflection of the variations of rumour and belief which developed, conflicted, died out, and revived among the early Christians in the latter years of the first century.

(2) *Matthew*.—A Hebrew tone is observable in this Gospel. Whereas *Mark* has a Gentile atmosphere, and has no allusions to the Jewish "law," the writer of *Matthew* pays respectful homage to the Old Testament system, as when, for instance, he makes Jesus say:—

One jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law till all things be accomplished.

The Rev. Sir J. C. Hawkins has detected a remarkable numerical feature. Traces appear of divisions of 5, of 7, and 3, as if, by such arrangements of the text, learners in the early Christian societies were better enabled to commit to memory the stories and discourses given to them by word of mouth from the teachers. Such a method was followed in Jewish synagogues, and would naturally be practised by Jewish-Christian disciples. Thus, the genealogy in the opening chapter is marked off into sections of fourteen names each. Five times the writer remarks that Jesus "ended" his speeches. There are seven blessings on character, seven petitions in the Lord's Prayer (but not seven in *Luke*, according to the Revised Version); and seven woes are pronounced upon the Scribes and Pharisees, the blind guides of the people. There are three duties—of alms, prayer, and fasting; and in v, 22, there are

three degrees of sin and punishment. It should be observed, in connection with the number 5, that the Hebrews often counted off on the fingers of the hand such lists as the five books of the Pentateuch, the five books of Psalms, etc. To strengthen our conception of this Gospel as a document used for the instruction of learners, we find it includes the Church formula for baptism in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (xxviii, 19). And why should the phrase "Kingdom of heaven" occur thirty-two times in this Synoptic, and not once in the two others? Why, again, should the simple "Blessed be ye poor" be changed into "Blessed are the poor in spirit"? We are prompted to infer that we are not dealing with a first-hand biography of Jesus, but a book adapted and edited with a view to some special dogmatic purpose. This judgment is confirmed by the allusion, more than once, to the "Church," though the "ekklesia" (church) is never named by the three other Gospels.

Perhaps the document was compiled, in what exact form one cannot say, early in the second century.

(3) *Luke*.—Critics are generally agreed that the third Synoptic and the book of *Acts* were written by the same person. Very obviously, the tendency of *Luke's* Gospel is away from rigid Judaism, and towards universalism. His pedigree of Jesus runs back to Adam, the father of all men, while the first Synoptic stops at the Hebrew Abraham. His Christ is a light to lighten the Gentiles. His Good Samaritan is superior in neighbourly love to the Jewish priest and Levite. His goodwill towards the Samaritans is a very evident sign of

a liberal interpretation of the Gospel message. More than any other New Testament writer he talks of the "people"; and not only is this emphasis on the people observable in his notes and comments, but it occurs in speeches of many varieties: the angels announce good tidings to all people; old Simeon's hymn in the Temple sings of salvation prepared before the face of all peoples; the crowd themselves say, after seeing Christ's miracles, that God has visited his people; and Jesus, prophesying the fall of Jerusalem, declares that wrath will descend upon this people; and so on. We conclude that the writer has a style of his own, which gives colour and fashion to the speeches he reports, as well as to the narrative he composes.

Not only does he introduce the people for what one may call scenic effect. His sympathies flow strongly with the common masses, as one sees in the parable of Lazarus, the poor man who was carried to the bosom of Abraham; the parable of the Unjust Steward, who uses mammon for his personal advancement on earth, just as the saints should use mammon (in alms to the poor) for their advancement in the eternal tabernacles; and many other illustrations might be cited. In like manner he evinces a regard for the religious worth of womanhood; it is he alone who tells of the psalms of Elizabeth and Mary, the thanksgiving of Anna, the Holy Mother pondering the words of her Son, the household cares of Martha, the devoutness of Mary, and the tender exhortation of Jesus on his way to the crucifixion, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children."

In the same spirit of compassion towards social

classes who were too often contemned, he writes the parables of the lost piece of silver, the lost sheep, the lost and prodigal son. Zacchæus, the despised tax-farmer, is admitted to the Kingdom on account of his frank and naïve willingness to share his goods with the people. "To-day," says Jesus, "is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham; for the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost." It is almost unnecessary to point out how the story of Christ's life, as narrated in this Synoptic, harmonizes with such social motives; it is *Luke* alone that pictures the divine babe lying in a manger, and the divine messengers proclaiming the Gospel to the simple shepherds who watched their flocks by night.

When we consider these characteristics, and add the fact that the third Synoptic is written in good Greek and with regard to dramatic interest of story and dialogue, we form the judgment that the author's chief, and certainly sincere, aim is to produce a connected, impressive, and picturesque history of the origins of the Christian faith and ethics. Whatever has power to edify he relates with all the skill at his command, and moral and spiritual edification is the ideal that dominates his Gospel.

Hence, we need not be surprised if, in a case much discussed by the learned, this Synoptic is at variance with the testimony afforded by non-Biblical sources; we mean the episode of the taxation, as to which *Luke* records (ii, 1-5):—

There went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled. This was the first enrolment made when Quirinius was governor of Syria.

And all went to enrol themselves ; everyone to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judæa, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David ; to enrol himself with Mary, who was betrothed to him.

This episode is placed in the Days of Herod. But Quirinius did not become governor of Syria till after Herod's death (B.C. 4). Josephus the Jewish historian, who has much to say about Herod and his times, does not mention such a census ; and he remarks that the census in Judæa (C.E. 7) in the days of Quirinius caused trouble on account of its novelty. In a Roman census, moreover, each man would report himself at his domicile, not his supposed clan-place, or "own city." Nor need Mary accompany for this legal purpose. Nor were the Galileans (Nazareth was in Galilee) subject to an order such as this, since they belonged to the territory under Antipas. After our survey of the style and tendency of this third gospel, we may surmise that the author would be governed principally by his conception of an interesting story, and he would date the birth of Jesus in such a time and environment as would best enhance the moral and religious quality of his legend. Herod the Great was a striking and dramatic figure, restless, ambitious, and scheming ; and the victory of the Holy Child, humbly born and nurtured, over so commanding a personage in the history of Judæa and the Empire, would marvellously attest the Messiahship of Jesus, and (as Mary sang, in her grateful hymn), the putting down of princes from their thrones.

The date of this gospel may be assigned to some

uncertain point in the first half of the second century.

We may now recur to the difficult problem, previously hinted at (p. 12) of the story of Christ's passion, crucifixion, and resurrection.

The gospel of *Matthew* (xxvii, 15, 17) says:—

Now at the feast the governor was wont to release unto the multitude one prisoner, whom they would. And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas. When therefore they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?

In a commentary on this passage, Origen mentions that in some copies of the Gospel, which he regards as heretical, Pilate asks, "Whom will ye that I release unto you, Jesus Barabbas or Jesus called Christ?" This allusion to "Jesus Son of the Father" (Barabbas=Son of the Father) may or may not indicate a mystery-play, or a popular custom, in the course of which a divine Son Jesus is offered up as a sacrifice; and in that case we might be encouraged to pursue the theory that the Gospel-story is connected with some such celebration. Sir J. G. Frazer, whose volumes on *The Golden Bough* are one of the glories of modern research in the history of religion, devotes a whole book to the subject of the "Dying God." In the course of this work, he tells how, among certain peoples of ancient and later times, a king would be put to death, even while in his prime, in order to preserve the kingship strong and vital in his young successor. But sometimes the king's son would be slain as proxy. "The son of the father" died in the father's stead. Such a custom would be modified when the proxy was taken from the

public prison, and a criminal put to death instead of the king or the Barabbas.

In his volume on *The Scapegoat* (Part 6 of the *Golden Bough*), Dr. Frazer follows up the clue in this way:—In an old Babylonian spring festival the god Marduk and the goddess Ishtar personified the life-forces of the New Year and triumphed over the winter elements. The Jews in Persia changed this old drama into the story of Mordecai (Marduk) and Esther (Ishtar) triumphing over the enemies of their race, as narrated in the Old Testament book of Esther. This nature-play, modified by Hebrew taste and ideas, was preserved in Judæa. Suppose, then, a figure in this popular play—namely, Barabbas—represented the god that must die, as Haman had to die on the gallows in the tale of Esther, or as the man-god had to die in the old Babylonish festival of Sacæa? In this festival the man-god who was doomed to die was for a while arrayed as a king, and sat on a throne, and was allowed to treat the real king's concubines as his own; and, after that, he was stripped, scourged, and killed. Thus one king escaped, and another king—the mock monarch—died. In the spring season the Jews of Judæa may have been allowed to take two prisoners from the gaol, both to be dressed as kings, one to be slain (a fate he would have incurred legally), and the other to be set free in a kind of popular amnesty. The one set free would be entitled Barabbas; and the Gospel incident amounts to this, that Pilate, the governor, asks the people of Jerusalem which of the two prisoner-kings he shall treat as Barabbas—Jesus of Nazareth or the rebel and murderer? He asks it because it appears to him that Jesus of Nazareth is not guilty



of any serious crime, and is merely the object of religious hatred. The mocking is related in all the Synoptics, and in *Luke* we are told that it was Herod and his soldiers—that is, Jewish soldiers—who arrayed Jesus (now Jesus-Barabbas) in gorgeous apparel and sent him back to Pilate. The story of the pioneer's death at Jerusalem would be carried, among other places, to Asia Minor, where, from time immemorial, the legend of a Dying God was familiar. The martyr was transfigured into a divine Son.

Mr. Robertson's theory is that the Gospel-story of the Last Supper, Passion, Trial, Crucifixion, and Resurrection is substantially reproduced from what one may term the word-book and stage directions of a mystery-play acted among some of the religious communities which originated Christianity. The story is peculiarly abrupt and compressed, and the action is so artificially hastened that the five divisions (five acts form a time-honoured stage series)—namely, Supper, Agony, Trial before the High Priest, Trial before Pilate, and Crucifixion—are all comprised within a few hours. Indeed, the third act takes place during the night, and the account then passes to the fourth, thus:—

And straightway in the morning the chief priests with the elders and scribes, and the whole council, held a consultation, and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him up to Pilate. And Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answering saith unto him, Thou sayest, etc. (*Mark* xv, 1, 2).

The passage just cited is itself one of the examples of swift transition from scene to scene such as one is accustomed to in stage-plays. Take, again, the episode of Gethsemane. Jesus goes with three

disciples to a retired spot, where, while he prays, his companions fall asleep. He continues praying, and his words are reported, though, except to an audience at the mystery, there is none to hear:—

He went forward a little, and fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass away from him. And he said, Abba (Father), all things are possible unto thee; remove this cup from me; howbeit, not what I will, but what thou wilt. And he cometh and findeth them asleep, etc. (*Mark xiv, 35-37*).

Another instance of what may be described as theatrical rapidity occurs a few verses later, where Jesus tells his companions to sleep, and then (after what, on the stage, would be a silent and dramatic pause) he exclaims, "Awake!"

Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they wist not what to answer him. And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest; it is enough; the hour is come; behold, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Arise, let us be going; behold, he that betrayeth me is at hand. And straightway, while he yet spake, cometh Judas, one of the Twelve, and with him a multitude with swords and staves, etc. (*Mark xiv, 40-43*).

Peter's denial and repentance are thus set forth in *Mark*:—

He began to curse and to swear, I know not this man of whom ye speak. And straightway the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word, how that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon he wept.

But the writer of the third Gospel appears to have preserved the theatre method more effectively, for he says that at the moment of the cock-crow "the Lord turned and looked upon Peter," a

gesture very readily realized on the stage. The reader should study the Synoptics with this hypothesis of the mystery-play in mind; and he may find a very natural ending for the play in the passage in *Matthew* xxviii, 8-10:—

And they [the women] departed from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring his disciples word. And behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and took hold of his feet, and worshipped him. Then saith Jesus unto them, Fear not; go tell my brethren that they depart into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

Many years afterwards, a document known as the Gospel of Nicodemus was written. It contains an account of the trial-scene under the heading of the Acts of Pilate. Whether the legend arose in the second century or later is of no great interest; but an inspection of the book shows that it treats the trial-scene in the same theatrical method already commented upon; and we take an example at random. When Jesus is brought into the court, the standards salute him miraculously:—

And the Jews, seeing the bearing of the standards, how they were bent down and adored Jesus, cried out vehemently against the standard-bearers. And Pilate says to the Jews: "Do you not wonder how the tops of the standards were bent down, and adored Jesus?" The Jews say to Pilate: "We saw how the standard-bearers bent them down, and adored him." And the procurator, having called the standard-bearers, says to them: "Why have you done this?" They say to Pilate: "We are Greeks and temple-slaves, and how could we adore him? and, assuredly,

as we were holding them up, the tops bent down of their own accord, and adored him." Pilate says, etc.

We seem to have here another type of dramatic work which may, in earlier times, and before the gospel took canonical rank as scripture, have been a popular mode of displaying to the non-reading crowd the salient incidents in the career of the Son of Man. There is, in short, nothing inherently unlikely in the supposition that, while old nature plays were gradually transformed into religious dramas, and the Barabbas drama, or some such drama, may have been current in Judæa and Asia Minor, the preaching, arrest, and tragedy of a real Jesus may have become associated with this transfigured mystery-play. Religion, art, and ancient tradition may all have co-operated in the creation of the Christian gospel.

## II. JOHN

While mystery-plays and stories of signs and wonders intensely impressed the simpler order of religious minds, the more philosophic order of minds would meditate on the nature, origin, and destiny of Jesus, and evolve a conception of him more likely to satisfy the educated intellect of the age. Towards 140 C.E. the Gospel of *John* may have been composed in realization of this tendency. In this Gospel the writer, who is a thinker, a mystic, and an artist, quite consciously builds up out of old materials in the Synoptics and other sources the noblest figure possible to his religious genius, and representing Christ as human indeed, but as supremely divine and dignified. He eclipses all the

miracles of the Synoptics by his story of the raising of Lazarus. In his narrative Jesus does not institute a sacramental supper when he eats with his disciples on the night before the crucifixion; he rather discloses to the people, in the course of his preaching, that he is himself the bread of life, to be eaten in faith and hope as a perpetual act of religion, and without reference to a ceremonial:—

Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. (vi, 53, 54.)

While the Synoptics describe John the Baptist as baptizing Jesus in the river Jordan, *John* omits this incident, as it would place Jesus on too low a plane; and he rather tells how John saw the Spirit of God descend like a dove, and abide on the head of Jesus, and he knew that this man was the Son of God. Whatever approaches the ignoble or merely popular is removed; and we hear nothing of the virgin-birth, the visit of the shepherds, the circumcision, the flight into Egypt, or the talk with doctors in the temple. Whatever may enhance the glory of Jesus is freely introduced. The Synoptists cannot relate, as the Fourth Gospel does, the healing of a man who has been sick for as long as thirty-eight years; nor of Jesus walking over the whole of a lake, instead of a portion. While the Synoptics paint Jesus in what artists would call the style of *genre*, and show us the teacher blessing the young children, telling tales to the eager crowd, and needing transfiguration to cover up his homeliness, the Fourth Gospel is a perpetual transfiguration of Christ's humanity into symbolic ideas and ideals.

These ideas are seven. Christ is the Eternal Word in seven aspects—bread, light, the door, the good shepherd, the resurrection, the way, the vine. A strong dualism manifests itself all through the book—light opposed to darkness; the Son of God to the Prince of this World; the truth of Christ to the scepticism of the Jews; the spiritual insight of Jesus to the gross misapprehension of the doubters and enemies. Nicodemus asks: “How can a man be born when he is old?” The woman of Samaria wants water that will quench thirst for ever. The disciples hear of heavenly bread, and say: “Lord, evermore give us this bread.” The Pharisees angrily ask: “Art thou greater than our father Abraham?” Pilate demands: “What is truth?” Thomas has objections: “Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, I will not believe.” To all these questions and tests Jesus has perfect replies and solutions. That is the absoluteness which the second century needed as a completing quality for its ideal Christ. When the Fourth Gospel and its doctrine of the Everlasting Logos became known in the Christian world, the creed began to take definition and orthodoxy. Other Gospels would be written, but this Fourth one would close the evangelical series for the Church universal. By adopting the general outline of the biography of Jesus it kept in touch with the simple man. By couching its doctrine in philosophic form it made the Christian faith acceptable to those who had respect for Heraclitus, for the Stoics, for Plato, or for Philo. Both the humble artizan and the Alexandrian student could appreciate the Jesus who lifted up his eyes to heaven and said:—

Father, the hour is come; glorify thy son, that thy

son also may glorify thee ; as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.....O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee ; but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.

It is important to observe that the Apocalyptic element is absent from this Gospel. The Synoptics had anticipated a Day of Judgment, with earthquakes and darkening of the sun, glory for the saints, and woes for the enemies of the Cross. But Christ had not appeared ; and the more thoughtful Christians perceived that the message of the new religion must go deeper than the sensation of a judgment-day and the crack of doom. Hence the inwardness and subjectiveness of the Fourth Gospel ; hence its assurance of the Comforter, of peace, of the kingdom which can be entered by the process of the Second Birth. "If a man love me," says Jesus, "he will keep my words, and my Father will love him ; and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." This coming of the divine being into the being of the Christian believer is the essence of the religion of *John*. But it is a spiritual and poetic advent of God to the soul, very different from the violent "Second Coming" of Christ, which appealed to the taste of those who loved visions of hurricane, of vials of wrath, of the dead rising from broken tombs, and of the Ancient of Days sitting on the great white throne of judgment. One may surmise that, if the doctrines represented in the Fourth Gospel had not been developed, a very considerable mass of the more cultured citizens of the Roman Empire would have withheld their support, and the Christian faith would have been confined largely to



the proletariat, just as the faith of Mithra appealed mainly to the soldiers. The Synoptics laid the basis in dramatic story and mystery-play; the Pauline literature added an intelligible system of theology; and to these picturesque and logical constituents the Johannine Gospel contributed a pensive philosophy, an inward light, and wells of living water.

The last chapter (xxi), containing the anecdotes of the seven fishers, and of the sons of Zebedee (not previously named in this Gospel), is written in a different Greek style, and is considered to be an appendix by another writer. Perhaps the author of *John* was of Jewish race and a dweller in Asia Minor. A deference to the Hebrew oracles is perceptible in such remarks by Jesus as this:—

Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. (v, 39.)

And there is a Jewish sound in the assertion that “the Scripture cannot be broken” (x, 35). The writer makes the singular mistake, however, of regarding the Jewish high-priesthood as changeable each year. Of more consequence is his error concerning the Passover. In the Synoptics Jesus eats the Passover supper with his disciples on the evening before his death:—

His disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them, and they made ready the passover; and in the evening he cometh with the Twelve. (*Mark* xiv, 16, 17.)

But, according to *John*, just before the crucifixion, Pilate

sat down in the judgment seat.....and it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour [midday], and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your king. (xix, 13, 14.)

As the Jews kept the Passover on the 14th day of the month Nisan, Jesus is crucified the next day, the 15th according to the Synoptics, and on the 14th according to *John*. The Christians of Asia Minor afterwards celebrated a Eucharist on the Paschal day, the 14th, while those of Rome regarded the 15th as the day of Christ's death. For many years the "Paschal controversy" supplied a pretext for much wordy combat.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE REST OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, INCLUDING "ACTS"

#### I. "HEBREWS," 1 PETER, JAMES, JOHN I, II, III

THE city of Rome, which was so vehemently abused by the writer of the *Apocalypse*, seems to have been the home of early Christian groups and writers; and in the streets which witnessed the processional triumphs of generals, and along which the citizens wended their way to the circus, the authors of several New Testament books, and kindred literature, may have mingled with the crowd, and dreamed of a day when Rome itself would adopt their faith and hope. In Rome, possibly, were composed the epistle to the *Hebrews*, the two epistles of *Peter*, the epistle of *James*, and the book of *Acts*. There is little doubt that they all belong to the second century.

If we can imagine the existence in Rome, at this period, of religious communities which, though not Jewish, had a deep interest in Jewish modes of thought and the Jewish sacred writings, we may perhaps have detected the circles in which the *Hebrews* document and similar essays were composed and appreciated. The epistle of *Clement*, which we have several times referred to, shows this taste and tendency. It cites the good or evil

examples of Cain, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, Elijah, Elisha, Ezekiel, and other Old Testament personages. The whole argument of *Hebrews* runs to the effect that the histories, the laws, and the ritual recorded in the Old Testament were foreshadowings of the good things to come with Jesus Christ. It is, in its literary aspect, the most satisfying of all the New Testament books; it has a definite theme, and pursues that theme (the fulfilment of Hebrew types by Christ) systematically, intelligibly, and with a quiet enthusiasm and conviction. It is easy to suppose the author not merely writing, but lecturing, in this style,—

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who, being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Such glowing language carries us far beyond the modest and tentative manner of the second Synoptic, which depicts Jesus as deprecating the title of Good Master, and which closes abruptly with an empty tomb, and a whisper that Christ is risen (*Mark* xvi, 1-8).

The writer has a sense of history and of the gradual unfolding of a great plan. Hebrew sacrifices symbolized the shedding of blood by that High Priest who offered up himself, was made perfect through his suffering, bore the sins of many, endured death—though he recoiled from the martyrdom and prayed with tears—and then was “brought again from the dead,” and exalted to the right hand of God. How

the writer uses material in the Scriptures to prove the High Priesthood of Jesus is curiously seen in his parable of Melchizedek and Abraham. This Melchizedek was a priest and king, without father or mother, to whom Abraham, ancestor of the Levitical priesthood, gave deference and tribute, thus showing, in allegory, that a higher priest than Aaron the Levite must in due time appear; and this was Christ. The passage well illustrates the habit, now taking strong hold on the Christian mind, of deducing the events of the Gospel as necessary sequels to certain hints and forecasts in the Old Testament. Such and such a fact was accepted, not simply because it was attested by witnesses on the spot, but because it was prophesied and typified. In harmony with this view of history is the emphasis on faith, a religious virtue which is eloquently pictured in the heroism of a long roll of saints and martyrs, who were pilgrims to the heavenly city. It is noteworthy that there is no allusion to Jesus rising from the dead in a way that would suggest deliverance from a sepulchre. He is carried straightway to heaven:—

This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God (x, 12; see also xii, 2).

It is almost as if we are meant to believe that the soul of Christ flitted from the cross to the divine throne.

We infer from this document that the Christian society had endured trials; but that in patience and loyalty, and holding fast the faith in simplicity of life and brotherliness, the saints awaited the appearance of Christ, assuring themselves that their names were enrolled in the books of heaven. As

to the date of this anonymous work, we can only vaguely assign it to the earliest quarter of the second century.

The name of the apostle Peter lends authority to an early second-century epistle known as 1 *Peter*, and addressed to readers in Asia Minor; and this innocent device was adopted by a Pauline writer who wishes to commend his ethical view of religion. Special emphasis is laid upon obedience. The saints are to be obedient children, to obey the truth, to submit to the laws of kings and governors, to follow the Shepherd, to be clothed with humility, and not to be ashamed to suffer as Christians. Such counsel, offered to the brethren of Bithynia (where Pliny had been perplexed by the problem of the Christian refusal to attend the temples), seems to suggest an effort on the part of men of influence to restrain ebullition and fanaticism. We know from the pages of the *Apocalypse* how fiery and uncompromising were some of the Asiatic members of the new religious movement. The writer of the epistle, far from encouraging anger with unbelievers, cites the example of Christ, who not only suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, but went to the underworld prison, and preached the Gospel to those forlorn souls who had been banished to the dreary shades ever since they disobeyed the call of Noah at the time of the Flood (iii, 18-20). The accent on personal ethics is seen also in the presentation of Christ's redemption as a motive to right conduct, and not merely as a purchase of kingdoms and crowns:—

His own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness.....Forasmuch, then, as Christ hath

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suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same mind ; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.

We remark, also, a preparation for the ideas which the Fourth Gospel was about to elaborate, as, for example :—

Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Logos of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

Just as such expressions witness to the character of the discussions and speculations which agitated the Christian societies in the first half of the second century, so the parallel phrases in 1 *Peter* and the Pauline documents show how the custom of examining current opinion was growing up among these eager groups. Here are some of the similarities of language which show how the writer has taken ideas from Paul :—

1 *Peter*, "Not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance"; and *Paul*, "Be not fashioned to this world, but be ye transformed." 1 *Peter*, "Offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable unto God"; and *Paul*, "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, acceptable unto God." 1 *Peter*, "We, having died unto sin, might live unto righteousness"; and *Paul*, "Being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness"; and so on, in other passages.

This looking backwards and forwards was a most natural thing at a stage when the faith, though already widespread, was yet unfinished in its doctrinal evolution.

So emphatically ethical, and so little doctrinal, is the booklet entitled *James* that we might take it to be either a Christian manual of good maxims, or a manual for the edification of liberal Jews. Omit one or two allusions, such as "servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ," and "the faith of our



Lord Jesus Christ," and the epistle becomes a golden treasury of exhortation, adapted to the synagogue as well as to the ekklesia. It is easy to understand how, among the competing temperaments and theorizings which were constructing the Christian system, some minds would prefer this quiet and practical character-building to the debates on theology, the questionings about the Second Advent, the arguments as to the resurrection, or the problem (illustrated in *Hebrews*) of the fulfilment of Scripture. So *James* advises deed rather than creed:—

If any man among you seem to be religious and bridled not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this—to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

Anybody who reads this admirable little treatise with attention will not only perceive the sincerity and moral directness of the man who writes it, but will call before the imagination the disputatious and troubled environment which prompted its composition. We know sufficiently well, from the Pauline writings and from the dialogues in the Fourth Gospel, how charged was the atmosphere of that age with nervous and even bigoted dialectic. Where the carcase was, the eagles were gathered; and where the new idea of the Dying and Risen God in the form of Jesus Christ had emerged, there the Paulinists, the Gnostics, the Johannists, and the rest, would assemble in animated parley and contention. Just as, centuries later, our Falkland "ingeminated peace" amid the tumults of the English Civil War, so this epistle to the brethren begs for mutual toleration and harmony:—

From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?.....Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law; but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy; who art thou that judgest another?

So earnest is the simple soul who pens this epistle in accenting the value of practical piety that, to the very end, he goes on cataloguing things worth doing—the anointing of the sick with oil, the prayer that brings healing, or perhaps rain, and the neighbourly confidential talk that converts a waverer to the right way. There is affinity between *James* and *1 Peter*. For instance:—

*1 Peter*: “Ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations”; and *James*, “Count it all joy when ye fall into manifold temptations.”

Critics disagree as to whether *James* followed or preceded the other author in order of composition.

The Johannine, or Logos movement, produced the three documents called *John*, i, ii, and iii; but it is useless to speculate as to the authors. All we can say is, that these tracts for the times come from the same school of thought as the Gospel of *John*. The polemical spirit which the writer of *James* deprecated in his gentle suaviseness here emits its defiant note:—

Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.....Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God; and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now it is already in the world.

This is another way of saying that while, in earlier years, the Christian story had been ignored, or treated as a popular tale, it was now provocative of continual discussion. No doubt, the writer of the epistle possesses a certain charitable temper within strict limits. "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen," he asks, "how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" But we suspect the love halts at the border-line of the believers in Christ; for the "whole world lieth in wickedness," and, though "God is love," the world is outside God and enshrouded in darkness. One feels that this separatist disposition, however ready to speak of love, has in it the rudiments of a perilous dogmatism. The conflict of the Christians who find God in the corporeal person of Christ is sharpening with the Gnostics who prefer the *gnosis* of a God that can effect his purposes without being incarnated. Valentinus the Gnostic was teaching about this time, and the writer of 1 *John* may have heard him or his followers allege that the Christ was phantasmal only, and only in appearance suffered on the cross. Whoever these antichrists were, they had no little success; whereat our author flashes forth thus:—

They are of the world; therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God; he that knoweth God heareth us: he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

Much stress is placed upon *knowing* the divine truth; and we can picture the contest of tongues in which both sides vehemently employ the same term with different connotations.

Two small letters (2 and 3 *John*) written by

"The Elder," a man who evidently holds the Johannine tenets very strenuously, are most pointed in their warnings. In the first the Elder contents himself with a scornful reference to many anti-christs who harass the peace, and who ought to be forbidden to enter one's house. In the second he names Diotrephes:—

Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words; and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.

Thus, as the Christian faith approached the position of absoluteness of creed, the antagonisms became naturally more acute, and each group sought to purge itself of such as would not accept its formulæ. No doubt, Diotrephes would refer to the Johannine Elder in equally drastic terms.

## II. ACTS

We have already cut the Gordian knot of the Pauline problem by rejecting the usual hypothesis of the death of Paul in 64. This Christian pioneer may, for all we know, have been born in 20 or 30, and died in 90 or 100, as "Paul the aged" (*Philemon*, 9); and some of the perplexities raised by Professor W. C. Van Manen may thus disappear. Many years later (that is, about 170) Dionysius of Corinth, who is quoted by Eusebius the historian, said that Peter and Paul endured martyrdom together in Rome; and later on Gaius the presbyter affirmed that the tombs of the two apostolic martyrs could be seen at Rome. Such is the poor

evidence for a date on which many considerations depend in the history of Christian origins. The book of *Acts* narrates Paul's trial before Felix, procurator of Palestine, 52-60, and again before Festus, 60-62; Festus dying in 62, though this date is uncertain. The assumption is commonly made that Paul was then transferred to Rome, and died there in the Neronian persecution, 64. No hint at such an event occurs in the *Acts*. How far that book may be relied upon in its history of Paul's travels and his appearances before Felix and Festus is a difficult question to decide.

The book, dating perhaps 130-150 C.E., was doubtless written by the author of the Synoptic *Luke*, to which it runs as a sequel. We must partly repeat some points previously set out in our chapter on Paul.

1. There is a singular parallelism between the missionary careers of Peter and Paul. Both open their work by healing a lame man. Peter cures by his shadow, Paul by his handkerchiefs. Peter and his colleagues cast out devils; Paul casts out devils. Both triumph over sorcerers. Both raise the dead. Both are worshipped. Both are beaten publicly; both scourged; both imprisoned; both supernaturally freed. Both see visions in connection with visions seen by others; Peter sees a vision which couples with one by Cornelius; and Paul sees a vision which couples with one by Ananias of Damascus. Both have power to impart the Holy Spirit. Both pay their devotions in the Temple. Both publicly defend their religious views, and both extract reluctant admissions from persons in authority—Gamaliel steps forward to shield Peter, and Felix trembles at Paul's preaching.

2. Compare Paul's actions and his religious attitude in the epistles and *Acts* :—

*Paul* (after conversion) : Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.....but I went into Arabia. *Acts* : Straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues.

*Paul* : I was unknown by face to the churches of Judæa. *Acts* : He was with the apostles coming in and going out at Jerusalem.

*Paul* (as to idol-meats) : Neither if we eat, are we the better ; neither if we eat not, are we the worse. *Acts* : Barnabas and Paul carry a letter to Antioch which says) : Abstain from meats offered to idols.

*Paul* : Neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcized.....The gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me. *Acts* : Paul took and circumcized Timothy (a Greek) because of the Jews.

*Paul* : No man is justified by the law.....Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law. *Acts* : Paul took four men, and, purifying himself with them, entered into the temple, etc.

*Paul* : He that speaketh in a "tongue" speaketh not unto man, but unto God ; for no man understandeth him. *Acts* : (Describes the Pentecostal "tongues" as heard and understood by) Parthians and Medes and Elamites, etc.....we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

*Paul* never speaks of any miracle performed by him. *Acts* : The Lord gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands (the hands of Paul and Barnabas).

3. As to discrepancies. The various accounts of Paul's conversion do not tally (p. 27). In one place Paul is warned in a vision to leave Jerusalem ; in another account of the same incident his friends protect him from the hostile Greeks, and remove him from the city. In one passage Peter makes a speech to the friends in Cornelius's house, and the Holy Ghost descends when he is advanced some way in his speech ; in another account the

Holy Ghost falls as he begins to speak. An awkward incongruity is visible in xiv., 1-4, where Paul and Barnabas stay in a city *because* the people are hostile :—

In Iconium they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed. But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and made their minds evil affected against the brethren. Long time, therefore, abode they, speaking boldly in the Lord, etc.

In the anecdote of the seven Jews who tried to exorcize the evil spirit from a man, we are told that the man rushed upon "both" the exorcizers. (*Acts*, xix., 14, 16; revised version). When, with such instances, we recall the strange fact that in one portion of the book the chief hero is called Saul, and in the later pages Paul, we may be moved to think the author fell into these confusions through using several literary sources, which were not unanimous in their statements, and which he inadequately fitted together.

4. So frequent, indeed, are the signs of a variety of sources used by the writer, and used without painstaking care in weaving their contents into a real unity of narrative, that an army of critics have analysed the book of *Acts* into numerous supposed documents which formed the original material. It looks as if these documents occasionally treated of the same events in different forms, and the author of *Acts* has sometimes retained both forms, thus producing an odd effect of "doubling." For example, take the two passages, (1) iv., 1-22, and (2) v., 17-42. As they are too long to quote, we summarize them.

(1) The priests and Sadducees are grieved



with the Christian preachers, and send them to prison for the night. Next day the priests reprove the Christians. Peter replies that they are acting for their Master, Jesus, who was slain and is now exalted. The priests marvel at the Christians' boldness, and hold a consultation, after which they command the Christians to cease their preaching, and then release them.

(2) The high priest and Sadducees are indignant with the Christian preachers, and send them to prison for the night. Next day the priests reprove the Christians. Peter replies that they are acting for their Master, Jesus, who was slain and is now exalted. The priests are cut to the heart, and hold a consultation, after which they command the Christians to cease their preaching, and then release them.

It will be seen that two episodes are written, with variations, into the same general framework, and we receive the impression that the writer of *Acts* has used two reports of substantially the same (alleged) occurrence, and has nevertheless allowed them to remain as separate histories.

Among the many attempts that have been made to disentangle the supposed sources is that of Spitta. He has divided the material in *Acts* into two main portions, on the supposition that (1) one source contains the speeches and the more normal incidents of the history, and that (2) the second source contains the legendary and sensational features; and that these two contributions have been combined and edited. An example of this process may be

seen in *Acts*, vii. Here we have a long, systematic, and eloquent speech by Stephen, in which he shows how the Jewish people have continually resisted the teachings of the Holy Ghost, and their culminating folly is the crucifixion of Jesus. The speech would be drawn from the first source. The second source would supply Stephen's exclamation that he sees Christ standing at the right hand of God, and the final scene of his martyrdom, of which the young man Saul (Paul) is an approving witness. If, again, we take chapter xiii, we shall attribute Paul's speech in the synagogue to the first source, and to the second source we shall trace the blinding of the Sorcerer, the blaspheming and reviling of the Jews. Yet another case is illustrated in chapters xxiv, xxv, xxvi, xxvii, xxviii, the whole section containing Paul's apologies before Felix, Festus, and Agrippa, and the story of the voyage to Italy being credited to the first source, and only Paul's debate with the Jews at Rome to the second. Another critic (Clemen) finds six sources in the section from chapter vi, to the end—a history of the Hellenist Jews (*e.g.*, Stephen's speech; a history of Peter; a history of Paul, including the "we" travel story); and three different redactors or editors who wrote over and between these separate documents. Even the "we" source is a subject of dispute, and even the apparently straightforward log-book which begins:

We sought to go forth into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us for to preach the gospel unto them. Setting sail therefore from Troas, we made a straight course to Samothrace, etc. (xvi, 10-12),—

is regarded as modified and interpolated by this or that subsequent hand.

5. If we collate *Acts* and Josephus with regard to two incidents, we note a lack of agreement. A speaker (Gamaliel) in *Acts* relates how the boastful Theudas raised an abortive rebellion; and after this man, he says, rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew mobs after him. But Gamaliel is represented as mentioning Theudas in a speech shortly after the death of Jesus (in 30 C.E.), whereas Theudas did not rebel till the years 44-46.

The story of the death of Herod Agrippa, as given in Josephus, tells of Herod's seizure with severe pains and his death five days later. In *Acts* he is said to be smitten by the angel of the Lord, and then to be eaten of worms. Of this eating by worms Josephus says nothing; and it is curious that another king hated by the Jews—namely, Antiochus—should have long ago been smitten by the God of Israel, and then been tormented by worms (2 *Maccabees*, ix).

6. We know from Paul's epistles that his basic doctrine was that of the Christhood of Jesus as attested by the resurrection and ascension. What, then, are we to say when, at his confrontation with the Jewish Sanhedrim (xxiii), he seeks to divide the Pharisee councillors from the Sadducee councillors by this apple of discord?—

When Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question. And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees; and the multitude was divided.....And there arose a great cry; and the scribes that were of the Pharisees' part arose and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man.

Here Paul has shifted his ground from the Christhood of the risen Jesus to the simple question whether the dead in general rise again ; and he is thus supposed to gain over to his side the very Pharisees who, in the Gospels, were perpetually opposing the teachings of Jesus.

7. From the literary standpoint the story of Paul's arrest in Jerusalem, his oration to the crowd from the steps of the fortress, his trials before the Sanhedrim, Felix, Festus, and Agrippa, is an excellent piece of workmanship, full of vigour and human interest such as one might expect from the author of the parables of the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son ; and the ensuing scenes of the voyage to Italy belong to that descriptive order which modern criticism connects with the name of Defoe. But when we closely inspect its contents with a view to judging its historical reliability, we find grave doubts arising. We ask the reader to follow the annexed passage, specially noticing the point at which we place three asterisks. Paul has just protested that, as a Roman citizen, he is exempt from examination by the lash :—

Paul said, But I am a Roman born. They then which were about to examine him straightway departed from him ; and the chief captain also was afraid when he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him. \* \* \* And when it was day the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul.

This passage reads continuously enough ; but in *Acts*, at the place marked by our asterisks, occurs the highly suspicious report of the trial at which Paul gives an incorrect statement of his attitude as to the resurrection ; and we incline to deem this

report an insertion. If we turn to the critical analysis of Jüngst, we observe that he, like others, marks this passage as not rightly belonging to the main source (that is, some unknown person wrote it in). Of the same inferior authority he regards these other passages—the words in the letter of Claudius Lysias referring to Paul's doctrines (xxiii, 28, 29); Paul's allusion to the council at which he asserted his belief in the resurrection (xxiv, 20, 21); Paul's apology to Agrippa for his resurrection doctrine (xxvi, 6, 7, 8); Paul's vision on board the ship (xxvii, 21–26); Paul's argument with the Jews at Rome (xxviii, 17–28).

Some hesitation is natural when we are asked to accept copies of a letter from Claudius Lysias, the chief captain, to Felix, the governor, and of a private conversation between the governor Festus and King Agrippa. However dramatically these things read in the well-told story, one is prompted to inquire how the author obtained his data.

When we review these characteristics of the book of *Acts*—particularly the admitted miscellaneousness of the sources out of which it was composed, and the unmistakable eagerness of the writer to tell an interesting story—we are prepared to conclude that he cared more for the edification of readers than for adherence to accuracy of historical facts. It is to be borne in mind that such a book would be written in order to produce an effect on hearts and moral judgments, and not in order to satisfy the curiosity of antiquarians. If the author could convey a vivid impression of the missionary zeal of Paul, of the harmony and co-partnership of all sections of the early Christians, and of the

urbane and tolerant attitude of the Romans as compared with the bigotry of the Hebrews, he would feel he did a duty towards his second-century readers. For his ideal was to spread a broad Pauline faith (though he was indifferent to details of Paul's personal creed), to persuade different and diverging groups to approach and co-operate, and to maintain amicable relations between the Christian communities and the imperial authorities. As to the Jews, liberal as the writer was (and in the parables and speeches he often exhibits a broad and generous spirit), he made little attempt to preserve a gracious temper. His last ironic shaft, flung at them through Paul at Rome, is a sneer at their dullness of insight, and he leaves them engaged in "great reasoning among themselves." He has given us a historical novel rather than a history.

### III. JUDE AND 2 PETER

Almost any time in the period 100–150 C.E., perhaps even later, the epistle of *Jude* or *Judas* may have been written. It is a fulmination against false teachers, whose retorts probably resembled the writer's own scathing language. These teachers are impious men, and sensualists, as bad in their morals as in their doctrines:—

These are spots in your love-feasts, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear; clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

In the course of this furious attack the writer quotes Enoch as prophesying the doom of all such

wretches. An inspection of the book of *Enoch* reveals parallelisms between this Jewish apocalypse and the Christian epistle:—

*Enoch*: Denied the Lord of Spirits and his anointed.  
*Jude*: Denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

*Enoch*: The Watchers who have left the high heavens.  
*Jude*: The angels which left their own abode.

*Enoch*: Wandering stars. *Jude*: Wandering stars.

*Enoch*: The seventh from Adam (*i.e.*, *Enoch*). *Jude*:  
*Enoch*, the seventh from Adam. (Then follows the quotation of *Enoch's* words, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints," etc.)

Whatever were the creeds held by the writer's opponents, he gives no details; nor does he seek to argue any case. He is indignant that any effort should be made to separate people from the membership of the group he was interested in.

These denunciations were adopted by the writer of 2 *Peter*, the last-written book of the New Testament, as applicable to heretics of his own day (150–170 C.E.); for example:—

*Jude*: There are certain men crept in privily, even they who were of old set forth unto this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denying our only Master. 2 *Peter*: There arose false prophets also among the people, as among you also there shall be false teachers, who shall privily bring in destructive heresies, denying even the Master.

*Jude*: Defile the flesh.....and rail at dignities. 2 *Peter*: Walk after the flesh and despise dominion. (Other parallels may easily be discerned.)

The writer quite openly represents himself as an apostle who witnessed the Transfiguration of Jesus on the mountain:—

We were eye-witnesses of his majesty; for he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this



voice which came from heaven we heard when we were with him in the Holy Mount.

And his personal friendship with Paul, the writer of epistles, "in which are some things hard to be understood," is affirmed in the closing verses.

In the Muratorian Fragment the compiler says: "The apocalypses also of John and Peter only do we receive, and some among us would not have the latter read in church." A portion of this apocalypse was unearthed in a Greek manuscript in Egypt (1886). It gives a description of heaven and hell, and in the account of the Inferno there occur a number of expressions which suggest likenesses with 2 *Peter*—"squalid," "blasphemers," "mire," "defilement of adultery," "darkness," "slandered," etc. The opening words in the apocalyptic fragment strongly savour of the style of *Jude* and 2 *Peter*: "Many of them will be false prophets, and will teach divers ways and doctrines of perdition; but they will become sons of perdition." It is difficult to pronounce just what may have been the relationship of the apocalypse and the epistle. The epistle, which is written in very inferior Greek, is believed by some critics to have been first issued in Egypt.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE CANON

GEOGRAPHICALLY, the origin of the New Testament literature may be approximately expressed thus:—The Common Tradition of the Synoptics arose in Palestine; to the south-west of Palestine, that is, in North Africa, the epistles *Hebrews*, *Jude*, and *2 Peter*; to the north-west of Palestine, that is, in Asia Minor and southern Europe, these books appeared—in Asia Minor, the apocalypse of *John*, the Gospel of *John*, the epistles of *John*, *1 Peter*, and some of the *Paul* documents; in Greece, some of the *Paul* documents; in Italy, some of the *Paul* documents, the Gospel of *Mark*, the *Hebrews* epistle, and the book of *Acts*. Mr. James Moffatt, who has drawn a map exhibiting these details, refrains from assigning any definite locality to the Gospels *Matthew* and *Luke*, and the epistle *James*.

The canon, or recognized collection of writings presenting the Christian faith, was partially fixed by the end of the second century. At that point Christians generally accepted the Four Gospels, the *Acts*, the thirteen epistles of *Paul*, *1 John*, and *1 Peter*; but a group of books were not yet held in such high esteem—namely, *Hebrews*, ii and iii *John*, *2 Peter*, *James*, *Jude*, and the Apocalypse of *John*.

The following books were recognized by Marcion in the middle of the second century: "The Gospel"

and ten Pauline epistles ; that is, Marcion omitted three of our present list, and these were the so-called Pastoral Epistles (1 and 2 *Timothy* and *Titus*).

The Muratorian Fragment begins, apparently, with *Mark*, and then enumerates *Luke*, *John*, *Acts*, thirteen epistles of *Paul*, *Jude*, two epistles of *John* (? which), the apocalypses of *John* and *Peter* ; the *Wisdom of Solomon*, and *Hermas* ; and no mention is made of 1 and 2 *Peter*, *James*, and *Hebrews*.

The Syrian canon, represented by the Peshito MS., may have arisen in the third century. Its list does not contain 2 and 3 *John*, 2 *Peter*, *Jude*, and the apocalypse of *John* ; and as the Peshito does not acknowledge such works as *Hermas*, it testifies to the vigour of a sifting process that must have gone on, amid much anxious questioning and altercation, for a good long century.

If we now take a stride to the fourth century, we obtain from the writings of the historian Eusebius (his life covering 270–340 C.E.) the following summary of books which were usually read in the churches, some as undoubtedly scripture, and some as of uncertain authority :—

First, then, we must place the holy quaternion of the gospels, which are followed by the account of the Acts of the Apostles. After this we must reckon the epistles of Paul ; and next to them we must maintain as genuine the epistle circulated as the “former” of John, and in like manner that of Peter. In addition to these books, if possibly such a view seems correct, we must place the Revelation of John, the judgments on which we shall set forth in due course. And these are regarded as generally received.

Then he proceeds :—

Among the controverted books, which are nevertheless well-known and recognized by most, we class the epistle circulated under the name of James, and that of Jude, as well as the Second of Peter, and the so-called Second and Third of John, whether they really belong to the Evangelist, or possibly to another of the same name.

More positively, he adds :—

We must rank as spurious the account of the Acts of Paul, the book called the Shepherd [*Hermas*], and the Revelation of Peter. And besides these the epistle circulated under the name of Barnabas, and the so-called Teachings of the Apostles [*Didache*] ; and moreover, as I said, the Apocalypse of John, if such an opinion seems correct, which some, as I said, reject, while others reckon it among the books generally received. We may add that some have reckoned in this division the Gospel according to the Hebrews, to which those Hebrews who have received Jesus as the Christ are especially attached. All these, then, will belong to the class of controverted books.

A church council held at Carthage in 397 C.E., and attended by Augustine, enumerated as canonical the books of the New Testament which have become classical for the modern world. Jerome (who died 420) included the same works in his Latin version (Vulgate) ; and thus, as the Roman Empire declined, the Roman Church was rising towards its marvellous dominion, equipped with a divine Bible as its guarantee and oracle.

## CHAPTER X

### OTHER LITERATURE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT TIMES

THE New Testament is a more or less popular selection from a mass of literature created in the first two centuries. With as much fullness as space allowed, we have indicated some of this literature, and now proceed to add brief descriptions of other non-Biblical documents, in order to show the general matrix from which emerged both the normal Christian faith and those ideas which were considered inharmonious, and were therefore sloughed off as heresies.

Unfortunately, much of the Gnostic literature is known only through quotations by critics, and the Gnostic teachers often appear in caricature records. In the book of *Acts* there appears a certain Simon Magus, who

bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one, to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God.....When Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee (viii, 9-18).

This magician was afterwards confused by the Christian writers with the Gnostic Simon of Gitta,

fragments of whose teaching survive. When he taught that from the infinite Silence sprang the male principle of Power and the female principle of Thought, his opponents burlesqued his view into a story of his companionship with a harlot Helena; and this parody illustrates the controversial habits of that age. Some Gnostics having adopted the serpent as the creative or phallic symbol of the divine Power or Logos, they were dubbed Ophites, or serpent-people, by their antagonists. It is worthy of remark that Celsus, whose sarcastic attacks on the Christian movement drew a long reply from Origen, spoke of the opinions of the Ophites as if they were the opinions of Christians; and this fact would indicate how, at one period, a medley of ideas, Gnostic and others, preceded what we now call orthodoxy.

Another remarkable evidence of the interpretation of Christian and Gnostic ideas is seen in the doctrine of the Docetæ, or Illusionists, according to which the divine Christ never became flesh, but only performed miracles and suffered the passion and the death in phantasmal appearance. Irenæus gives this account of the Docetic theory, though here again, and especially in the reference to Jesus laughing, one may suspect an element of caricature:—

The Father without birth and without name.....sent his own first-begotten Nous [Mind]—he it is who is called Christ—to bestow deliverance on them that believe in him, from the power of those who made the world. He appeared, then, on earth as a man.....and wrought miracles. Wherefore he did not himself suffer death, but Simon, a certain man of Cyrene, being compelled, bore the cross in his stead; so that this latter, being transfigured by him that he might be thought to be Jesus, was crucified, through ignorance and error, while

Jesus himself received the form of Simon, and, standing by, laughed at them. For, since he was an incorporeal power and the Nous of the Unborn Father, he transfigured himself as he pleased, and thus ascended to him who had sent him, deriding them; inasmuch as he could not be laid hold of, and was invisible to all.—*Against Heresies*, Book i, chap. xxiv.

This instructive passage from Irenæus denotes the vague and indefinite religious thought of those times, and not only shows how Gnosticism sought to combine with the Christian Gospel, but also how loosely people regarded the evidences for the historical existence of the Jesus of the Gospel tradition; for the Docetæ, after hearing the story of Jesus related by a simple-minded neighbour, would reply that the real Christ never did and never could become incarnate. In other words, the Christ doctrine was held as valid apart from any consideration of the facts of the popular biography of Jesus in the Gospel.

The principal conceptions in the Gnostic systems (for there was no one fixed system) were these:—The Great Mother, or Light-Maiden, or Helena, or Sophia; the Primal Man, who existed before Adam, and took a variety of shapes, of which Christ was the last; the Thirty Æons, or divine emanations, of whom Sophia was one; the Demiurge, who was none other than the God of the Old Testament epoch, and who created matter; the divine Goodness, superior to the Demiurge and the evil matter, and whose fullness, or Pleroma, was displayed in the Æons; the Bythus, or Abyss at the back of all beings and being. If we add other details—that of the Ogdoad, or Eight Æons; the Hebdomad, or Seven Æons; the Fall of Sophia, or the world-soul; the doctrine of the salvation of the soul, through



age-long processes; and a complicated ritual which included sacraments and symbols and mystical sacred names—we have sufficient data for understanding how it was that the general opinion of the Christian world shook itself free from so difficult and complicated a scheme of religion. Nevertheless, such speculations had a fascination for a certain type of mind, and many were the attempts to reconcile the Gnosis and the Gospel.

The imaginative side of Gnosticism may be studied in the Song of the Soul, which tells how the soul, dismantled of its heavenly robe, goes down to Egypt (the human body), finds the great pearl of the Gnosis, and returns to its celestial home, and resumes the robe:—

I snatched away the pearl, and turned to go back to my Father's house.....and I took my way straight to come to the light of our home, the East.....and my toga of brilliant colours I cast around me, in its whole breadth. I clothed myself therewith, and ascended to the gate of salutation and homage; I bowed my head, and did homage to the majesty of my Father who had sent it to me.

A Gnostic treatise, entitled "Pistis Sophia" (Faith-Wisdom), was written in the second or third century; and, if written or compiled in the third, reflected earlier views. It represents Jesus discoursing with his disciples, including Mary his mother, and Mary Magdalene. An extract will illustrate the mystical speculations in which pious souls often took peculiar pleasure:—

Lo, I have put on my vesture, and all power hath been given me by the first mystery. Yet a little while, and I will tell you the mystery of the Pleroma and the Pleroma of the Pleroma, I will conceal nothing from you from this hour, but in perfectness will I perfect you in the whole Pleroma, and all perfection, and every mystery;

which things, indeed, are the perfection of all perfections, the Pleroma of all Pleromas, and the Gnosis of all Gnoses, which are in my vesture.

It was in order to divert the popular mind from these subtle and perplexing endeavours to explain the world and the soul's experiences that Tertullian and other Christian leaders vigorously denounced Gnosticism as a deadly heresy. Before passing from the Gnostics to other schools of thought, we must acknowledge the patience and industry with which Mr. G. R. S. Mead has sought to explain their faith to the English reading public.

Though the writer Hermas (about 140-155) belongs to no such recognized school as that of the Gnostics, his allegorical work, the *Shepherd*, is an interesting, and even charming, example of the æsthetic aspects of early Christian thought. His *Shepherd* may be classed with the parable literature illustrated in the works of Comenius and John Bunyan. In his visions he is admonished by the fair damsel Rhoda (as Dante by Beatrice in the *Divine Comedy*), and by a venerable dame who symbolizes the Church. Then there enters a man of glorious aspect, dressed like a shepherd, in a white goat-skin garment, having a wallet on his shoulders and a rod in his hand. He delivers to Hermas Twelve Commandments, and relates Ten Parables or Similitudes. One of the Similitudes portrays a plain, in the midst of which is a large white rock, square in shape, and pierced by a gate, "recently constructed," the rock being a fortress in process of building. The Shepherd and Hermas converse:—

"What is the meaning of the rock and the gate?"  
 "This rock," he answered, "and this gate are the Son of

God." "How, sir?" I said: "The rock is old, and the gate is new." "Listen," he said, "and understand, O ignorant man. The Son of God is older than all his creatures, so that he was a fellow councillor with the Father in his work of creation; for this reason is he old." "And why is the gate new, sir?" I said. "Because," he answered, "he became manifest in the last days of the dispensation; for this reason the gate was made new, that they who are to be saved by it might enter into the Kingdom of God. You saw," he said, "that those stones which came in through the gate were used for the building of the tower, and that those which did not come were again thrown back to their own place." "I saw, sir," I replied. "In like manner," he continued, "no one shall enter into the Kingdom of God unless he receive his holy name."

This name, the Shepherd adds, is the name of the Son of God, which supports the whole creation. It is in baptism, which is the "seal," that a man received the name of the Son of God. A hint is given of sufferings borne for the name's sake:—

"Why, sir," I said, "do all these trees bear fruit, and some of them fairer than the rest?" "Listen," he said; "all who once suffered for the name of the Lord are honourable before God; and of all these the sins were remitted, because they suffered for the name of the Son of God. And why their fruits are of various kinds, and some of them superior, listen. All," he continued, "who were brought before the authorities and were examined, and did not deny, but suffered cheerfully—these are held in greater honour with God, and of these the fruit is superior; but all who were cowards, and in doubt, and who reasoned in their hearts whether they would deny or confess, and yet suffered, of these the fruit is less."

There are peculiarities in this work. The writer quotes nothing from the Old Testament, and, though he discourses of God, the Son of God, the Holy Spirit, and the Church, he never names either "Jesus" or "Christ." This is an additional proof

of the proposition we have frequently broached—that the originators of the Christian faith were more occupied with spiritual doctrines than with a specific historical scheme or a definite biography of Jesus.

The epistle of Clement to the Corinthian Christians has been cited in previous pages. Its object was to restore order in the community, which had been disturbed by quarrels as to the election of Church officers, and to offer ethical counsel. Incidentally Clement shows us how a variety of social classes were drawn into the growing movement:—

Let the strong not despise the weak, and let the weak show respect unto the strong. Let the rich man provide for the wants of the poor; and let the poor man bless God, because he hath given him one by whom his need may be supplied.

This almsgiving, often alluded to in the Pauline writings, becomes a permanent feature in Christian societies, and illustrates the economic condition of the members. Clement's view of the propaganda of Christ's immediate apostles suggests a larger travelling activity than that described in the book of *Acts*:—

The apostles have preached the gospel to us from the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ [has done so] from God.....Having therefore received their orders, and being fully assured by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and established in the word of God, with full assurance of the Holy Ghost, they went forth proclaiming that the Kingdom of God was at hand. And thus preaching through countries and cities, they appointed the first-fruits, having first proved them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons of those who should afterwards believe.

Clement furnishes no details as to the personal career of Jesus.

The epistle of "Barnabas" (100-125) was one of

the many controversial pamphlets written in the second century in an anti-Jewish spirit, and plentifully garnished with Old Testament quotations. The style is commonplace, and the writer's intellectual level may be gauged by his serious statement that the hyæna annually changes its sex. An allusion to the weekly sacred rest is noticeable: "We keep the Eighth Day with joyfulness, the day on which Jesus rose again from the dead, and, having been manifested, ascended into the heavens."

The fragments of Papias have been sufficiently examined.

About the middle of the second century Justin Martyr wrote his two *Apologies* in Greek and his anti-Jewish *Dialogue with Trypho*. Whether arguing against the Græco-Roman religion or commenting on Gnosticism, his method was to ascribe to "devils" the opinions from which he differed. For example, he thus refers to Marcion:—

The devils put forward Marcion of Pontus, who is even now teaching men to deny that God is the maker of all things in heaven and on earth, and that the Christ predicted by the prophets is his son, and preaches another God besides the Creator of all, and likewise another Son. And this man many have believed, as if he alone knew the truth, and laugh at us, though they have no proof of what they say, but are carried away irrationally as lambs by a wolf.

Justin never speaks of Paul. The Logos doctrine runs obviously through his Christian speculation. He names no New Testament book except the *Apocalypse*. We have already discussed his supposed quotations from the Gospels. The following passage from his *Apology* is of interest, as it exhibits an authentic picture of a second-century church meeting:—

On the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits ; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying, Amen ; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons. And they who are well-to-do, and willing, give what each thinks fit ; and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succours the orphans and widows, and those who, through sickness or any other cause, are in want, and those who are in bonds, and the strangers sojourning among us, and, in a word, take care of all who are in need. But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world ; and Jesus Christ our Saviour on the same day rose from the dead. For he was crucified on the day before that of Saturn ; and on the day after that of Saturn, which is the day of the Sun, having appeared to his apostles and disciples, he taught them these things, which we have submitted to you [the Roman people] also for your consideration.

In the period 138–161 Aristides, “ a philosopher of Athens,” addressed an Apology to the Emperor Antoninus Pius. Its tone was sober, and it contained no diatribes against Jews or Gnostics ; and neither the Logos doctrine nor Pauline theology appeared in the argument. Here is Aristides’ account of Christian origins :—

The Christians trace the beginning of their religion from Jesus the Messiah ; and he is named the Son of God Most High. And it is said that God came down from heaven, and from a Hebrew origin assumed and clothed himself with flesh : and the Son of God lived in

a daughter of man. This is taught in the Gospel, as it is called, which a short time ago was preached among them ; and you also, if you will read therein, may perceive the power which belongs to it. This Jesus, then, was born of the race of the Hebrews ; and he had twelve disciples in order that the purpose of his incarnation might in time be accomplished. But he himself was pierced by the Jews, and he died and was buried ; and they say that after three days he rose and ascended to heaven. Thereupon these twelve disciples went forth throughout the known parts of the world, and kept showing his greatness with all modesty and uprightness. And hence, also, those of the present day who believe that preaching are called Christians, and they are become well known.

The phrase " a short time ago " is a token of the indefiniteness with which the primitive Christians calculated the chronology of their Gospel.

Another " Apology," perhaps written about 177, in the reign of Marcus Aurelius, was that of Athenagoras, " the Christian philosopher of Athens." To the polytheism of Greece and Rome he opposes the creed of the One God and the Logos-Son :—

If it occurs to you to inquire what is meant by the Son, I will state briefly that he is the first product of the Father, not as having been brought into existence (for, from the beginning, God, who is the eternal Nous, had the Logos in himself, being from eternity instinct-with-Logos) ; but, inasmuch as he came forth to be the idea and energizing Power of all material things, which lay like a nature without attributes, and an inactive earth, the grosser particles being mixed up with the lighter.

He does not name " Jesus " or " Christ " ; indeed, he writes more like a theist than an evangelical Christian—that is, a Christian who attaches a supreme value to the Christ of the Gospels.

Perhaps from the middle of the second century dates the " Gospel of Peter," which may have been known to Justin Martyr, and which, unfortunately,



is at present only represented to modern scholarship in a Greek fragment, discovered in 1886-7 in Upper Egypt. The fragment opens at the trial before Pilate, and breaks off just after the resurrection. There is a Docetic suggestion in the record that on the cross Christ "held his peace as though having no pain." When the stone was rolled away from Christ's sepulchre, the Roman soldiers saw:—

Three men come forth from the tomb, and two of them supporting one, and a cross following them; and of the two the head reached unto heaven, but the head of him that was led by them overpassed the heavens. And they heard a voice from the heavens, saying: "Thou hast preached to them that sleep." And a response was heard from the cross, "Yea."

Of the fifteen supposed epistles of Ignatius the martyr, only seven are usually claimed to be genuine by conservative critics, and even then the issue is further confused by the doubt as to which version—a shorter or a longer text—is the original. The date of the martyrdom is uncertain, and the whole subject of the epistles is environed with doubts. If, as is intimated in the documents, Ignatius is on the way to death in Rome, and in the custody of ten soldiers, it is matter for wonder how he can compose epistles on church government and the duty of obedience to bishops, and the like. The letter to the Romans is a hymn in praise of martyrdom:—

I am God's wheat, and I am ground by the teeth of wild beasts that I may be found pure bread.....Come, fire and cross and grapplings with wild beasts, wrenching of bones, hacking of limbs, crushings of my whole body; come, cruel tortures of the Devil!

To the Ephesians he gives advice as to compliance with church rules, and partaking of the Eucharist:—

Obey the bishop and the presbytery with an undivided mind, breaking one and the same bread, which is the medicine of immortality, and the antidote to prevent us from dying.

It is somewhat of an irony that, while Ignatius is so convinced of the truth of his creed that he raises an anthem to the death endured in its service, he has to debate Gnostic ideas which are entertained in the circle of the Christian community itself. For instance :—

They speak of Christ, not that they may preach Christ, but that they may reject Christ ; and they speak of the law, not that they may establish the law, but that they may proclaim things contrary to it. For they alienate Christ from the Father, and the law from Christ. They also calumniate his being born of the Virgin ; they are ashamed of his cross ; they deny his passion ; and they do not believe his resurrection. They introduce God as a Being unknown ; they suppose Christ to be unbegotten ; and as to the Spirit, they do not admit that he exists. Some of them say that the Son is a mere man, and that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are but the same person, and that the Creation is the work of God, not by Christ, but by some other strange power.

He laments the views of the Docetæ :—

Some that are without God say he [Christ] became man in appearance, that he did not in reality take unto him a body, that he died in appearance, and did not in very deed suffer.....

Though he exhorts to love and patience, his attitude towards religious opponents is expressed in these terms :—

Avoid those wicked offshoots of Satan, Simon his first-born son, and Menander, and Basilides, and all his wicked mob of followers.....Flee also the impure Nicolaitans .....also the children of the Evil One, Theodotus and Cleobulus.

One of the phrases just cited seems to have come

into vogue as a debating epithet, for the martyr Polycarp, in his epistle to the Philippians, denounces as "the first-born of Satan" any person who questions the truth of the resurrection doctrine. This document—whatever may be the doubts as to its authorship—at any rate witnesses to a growing enthusiasm in some quarters for the Pauline teaching; for Polycarp is made to say:—

Neither I, nor any other such one, can come up to the wisdom of the blessed and glorified Paul. He, when among you, accurately and stedfastly taught the word of truth in the presence of those who were then alive.

A mid-second-century homily, sometimes called the Second Epistle of Clement, is a discourse on loyalty to the ideal of Christian piety in a perverse world. The homily contains some sayings of the Lord not reported in the New Testament:—

Let us do the will of him that called us, and not fear to depart out of this world. For the Lord saith: "Ye shall be as lambs in the midst of wolves." And Peter answered and said unto him: "What, then, if the wolves shall tear the lambs?" Jesus said unto Peter: "The lambs have no cause after they are dead to fear the wolves."

And this rather obscure prophetic utterance:—

The Lord himself, being asked by one when his Kingdom would come, replied: "When two shall be one, and that which is without as that which is within, and the male with the female, neither male nor female."

Tatian, the author of the gospel harmony entitled "Diatessaron," has been already noticed.

The Epistle to Diognetus affords another illustration of the preference given by many minds to the spiritual conception of Christ the Logos over the concrete Jesus presented in the popular history of the Synoptics and other such gospels. For example:—

This was no mere earthly invention which was delivered to them [Christians], nor is it a mere human system of opinion, which they judge right to preserve so carefully, nor has a dispensation of mere human mysteries been committed to them, but truly God himself, who is almighty, the Creator of all things, and invisible, has sent from heaven, and placed among men the Truth and the holy and incomprehensible Word, and has firmly established him in their hearts.

About 180 Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, wrote criticisms of the Græco-Roman Gods in the style customary in the apologies of the time. He attributes the Fourth Gospel definitely to "John"; and he proposes the following moral tests to distinguish between Christians and non-Christians:—

Show me yourself whether you are not an adulterer, or a fornicator, or a thief, or a robber, or a purloiner; whether you do not corrupt boys; whether you are not insolent, or a slanderer, or passionate, or envious, or proud, or supercilious; whether you are not a brawler, or covetous, or disobedient to parents; and whether you do not sell your children; for to those who do these things God is not manifest.

It is very significant of the unsettled condition of the Christian doctrine that Irenæus, bishop of Lyons in Gaul, at the close of the second century, should have written a lengthy treatise "Against Heresies," with the object of clearing the minds of his Gaulish flock from the Gnostic ideas which have haunted us all along our journey on the path of Christian literature. The spirit in which he conducted the discussion may be judged from the following passage:—

I have laboured to bring forward, and make clearly manifest, the utterly ill-conditioned carcase of this miserable little fox.....It is as when, on a beast hiding itself in a wood, and, by rushing forth from it, is in the habit of destroying multitudes, one who beats round the

wood and thoroughly explores it, so as to compel the animal to break cover, does not strive to capture it, seeing that it is truly a ferocious beast ; but those present can then watch it and avoid its assaults, and can cast darts at it from all sides, and wound it, and finally slay that destructive brute.

Another mode of Christian thought at one time (about 150-180) strongly current in Phrygia was that expounded by Montanus, who placed an extreme value on fasting and celibacy, and opposed military service and proclaimed a revelation through the Holy Spirit or Paraclete. This Puritanism affected the views of the famous writer Tertullian. A finer spirit—the finest, perhaps, among the Christians of that age—was Clement of Alexandria (150-220), whose vivid portrayal of the life, the crowds, the recreations, and follies of Alexandria, amid which the austere Christians moved in sobriety and meekness, bears the marks of literary genius. While he caustically laid bare the weaknesses of the Greek Gods, he prized the glories of Greek philosophy, and to him Plato was but “Moses talking Attic Greek”; and even pagan schools of thought were “illuminated by the dawn of light.” His description of the Christian saint and gentleman as the “True Gnostic” indicated a temper which endeavoured to reconcile divergent religious ideals.

## CHAPTER XI

### REVIEW

IN attempting to explain the origin and character of the New Testament we have found it necessary to trace ideas and events over a period of some 400 years—that is to say, from about 200 B.C. to 200 C.E.

At the outset of our inquiry emphasis was placed upon the fact that the Christian system and its documents arose among people whose economic condition was usually inferior. Slavery was the basis of the Roman Empire, and death by crucifixion threatened the slave who aroused his master's anger. The practice of giving liberty, with certain restrictions, to slaves was growing, and the number of freedmen was considerable. Country slaves in Italy often worked on the farms in chains, and their gangs were severely disciplined by overlookers, and the half-shaven head and the brand on the skin were tokens of their harsh servitude. By degrees, however, their lot was undergoing amelioration; the right to slay them was gradually taken from their owners; their marriages were legally recognized; and social sentiment, anticipated by the philosophic Seneca's maxim in the first century—"Nature bids me assist men, whether bond or free"—was moving towards the transformation of slavery into serfdom. A stage would arrive, in the later days of the Empire, when the *coloni*, or serfs,

cultivated land for their own profit, and owned property, though they were bound to the master's estate. We have seen how artizans, and freedmen, and sometimes slaves, formed clubs and associations for benefit, recreation, and religious objects. Amid such a proletariat, slowly evolving towards a higher condition of freedom, a variety of religious doctrines and ideals floated, intermingled, clashed, and produced legends, "mysteries," dramatic symbolizations, and a mass of literature; and the intellectual quality of this cultus, art, and literature was, in the nature of the case, often inferior, though associated with propagandist energy and moral passion. On the side of ritual the Roman world and its environment offered the mysteries and sacraments connected with Mithra, Orpheus, Attis, and other gods. On the side of legend, eastern faiths and the religions of Egypt and Asia Minor and the mythology of Greece and Judæa supplied an opulence of material and stimulus. On the side of literature, ample foundations were laid by the Old Testament, by non-Biblical apocalypses and devotional works (such as *Enoch*, the *Psalms of Solomon*, and the *Didache*), and by the beginnings of Gnosticism. But, whatever line the development took, the peculiar economic note of early Christianity cannot be missed. "Blessed are ye poor," said Jesus. "Give us this day our daily bread," breathed the Lord's Prayer. Jesus himself was born in a stable; his vocation, followed for a considerable time, was carpentry; he had not where to lay his head; his disciples were (says *Acts*) "unlearned and ignorant men"; his parables portrayed scenes from the experiences of the poor; and the New Testament and related documents



abound in allusions to alms-giving to church members. The Gospel denunciations of the scribes and Pharisees not only express contempt for their religious hypocrisy, but also indignation at their exploitations :—

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer ; therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.....Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess (*Matt.* xxiii, 14, 25).

Nothing could be more significant than the curse of *Luke* :—

Woe unto you that are rich ! for ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you that are full ! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep (vi, 24, 25).

The same Gospel delivers the curse concretely in the shape of the parable of the Rich Man in Hell. And the vision of the Day of Judgment is the Poor Man's vision :—

When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations ; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats ; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world ; for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink ; I was a stranger, and ye took me in ; naked, and ye clothed me ; I was in prison, and ye came unto me (*Matt.* xxv, 31-36).

The social import of passages such as these is too frequently underrated by the student of the Bible.

They give a clue to tendencies in early Christianity ; they explain much of the indifference to evidences and tests which marks the advocates and supporters of the new faith ; they adumbrate that abasement of spirit which characterized Christian thought in the Middle Ages ; and they point to the beginnings of the self-depreciation which Nietzsche scoffed at as a lack of physiological stamina. They witness, indeed, to hope and joy ; but the hope is for a future kingdom, and the joy is in the prospect of release from a world in which there is no abiding city for the saints ; and no courageous resolve to influence and annex the economics and politics and philosophy of the world imparts a virile tone to the New Testament piety.

On the understanding that we set aside as practically baseless the tradition of Paul's death in 64, we have regarded the Pauline epistles as, on the whole, the production of a fervent propagandist who, as "Paul the aged," may have lived till near the close of the first century, and seen the establishment and growth of many Christian communities ; though one has to bear in mind the weighty arguments of W. C. van Manen against the authenticity of the Pauline literature. Paul (so we have contended) was an enthusiast for the Christ-principle as distinct from the Jesus-principle. That is to say, he believed God had recently unveiled a divine mystery by choosing the man Jesus as the point of union between the celestial and the mortal, and so liberating humanity from the ancient bondage of a complicated moral law, and introducing a spiritual freedom which made religion a joy and an everlasting peace. The resurrection of Jesus was the mode in which

God signified the revelation. No doubt, to the twentieth-century mind, it seems that Paul ought to show an interest in the annals of Christ's life from Bethlehem to the Ascension from the Mount of Olives; but he shows no such interest; he was too absorbed in the thought of the inauguration of the reign of the Spirit. Hence, Paul's gospel does not present itself as a concrete picture of Jesus of Galilee, but as a doctrinal ecstasy, thus:—

O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.....If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.....As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God (*Romans* vii, 24; viii, 14).

With such ideals before the eye of his faith, Paul was not likely to attach much importance to the exact times and seasons of the second advent of Christ. Some hints concerning the Day of the Lord he may have dropped in the *Thessalonian* document; but the chief illustration of this element of the Christian movement is found in the *Apocalypse*. That book betrays a temper and a luridness of zeal far removed from the ethics of Paul; and we have seen that it belongs to a special literary series which began with such books as *Daniel* and *Enoch*, and continued in such second-century forms as the *Apocalypse of Peter*. These visions of judgment exhibit, in dramatic guise, the same

unlovely attitude towards opponents and "sinners" as Irenæus and other critics of Gnosticism practised in theological argument. The *Apocalypse* curses Rome as the harlot and beast; and Irenæus sneers at the Gnostics and their system as hunted vermin and children of Satan.

The reader is aware that while masses of people yield a more or less thoughtful belief to the New Testament account of Jesus, just as it stands, a group of critics deny the historicity of Jesus; the denial amounting to a conclusion, after examining the evidences, that the Gospel Jesus is mythical, and, moreover, that no person passably resembling him, on a non-miraculous basis, ever existed. Our own position is a very simple one—namely, that it seems natural to trace the Gospel movement to an impulse furnished by the teaching career (in all likelihood brief, and terminated by execution) of an enthusiast who proclaimed the near approach of the Kingdom of Heaven, and who preached an ethical message eminently adapted to religious minds among the proletariat of Palestine, yet irritating and disturbing to the Jewish authorities. This short episode occurred at a moment of eager expectation. For centuries the region of the Roman republic and empire had experienced many varied quests after God—the Jewish, the Egyptian, the Zoroastrian, the Greek, the Roman, and the quests represented by Attis, Tammuz, Mithra, the Logos-idea, and the rest. At the same time, there had been a slowly-evolving sense of the value of humanity in the wonderful assemblage of tribes and nations under the dominion of the Roman eagles; and even the slave population was quickened by this dawning sense. The union of God and

humanity in a Son of Man was the point towards which pious hope, the political situation, and the economic conditions alike converged. The death of Jesus, happening in such an atmosphere, was followed by the report of his resurrection and return to heaven. The Pauline theology (whether of a personal Paul or a religious school) fastened with avidity upon a suggestion which it was peculiarly prepared for, and which had for it an interest far superior to that of any detailed biography of Jesus. On the other hand, the Synoptic Gospels, drawing upon popular legend, and (in the case of the Passion and Crucifixion) upon popular mystery-drama, portrayed in pathetic and vivid scenes the life-story of a Jesus who was a picturesque hero rather than the fulcrum from which to operate a Pauline doctrine.

Certain elements of the Gospels, in which this popular narrative is embodied, are traceable to previous literature, and these we indicated by quotations from the *Book of Enoch* and other documents. The authors of the Gospels did not issue a revelation stamped with uniqueness; they followed on naturally from the ideas and imagery of their fathers. Nor was their account of Jesus received by the public of the Roman Empire as a unique and commanding message. We ranged through a series of second-century writings, such as those associated with the names Barnabas, Ignatius, Polycarp, Papias, and Justin Martyr; and we could discover, up to the second half of that century, no plain and satisfactory references to the Four Gospels which were later known as divine and canonical. As a matter of fact, these documents were undergoing a shaping and re-shaping

process by people who are unknown to us, who were poets rather than critics, and who were more concerned to build up a dramatic and concrete presentation of a religious ideal than to record exact history and biography.

The fundamental story, sifted out of the three Synoptics by modern patience and scholarship, constitutes the Triple Tradition. It looks as if a variety of popular anecdotes, parables, and moral maxims—derived from the career and teaching of an actual Galilean prophet, and contributed also by eager and imaginative pietists in Asia Minor, Rome, and elsewhere—took literary form in pamphlets and memoranda, and as if the writer of *Mark* composed a fairly connected narrative out of such materials; and as if, from these older manuscripts, from *Mark*, and from mouth-to-mouth traditions, the compilers of *Matthew* and *Luke* had produced fresh Gospels, characterized by special motives and tendencies. If we affirm that the Gospels are pre-eminently pieces of literature, the proposition appears almost superficial; and even people who have regarded these booklets as divine communications to mankind may, with a little hesitation, agree. Such persons will perhaps concede that *Mark* has features of brevity and picturesqueness; that *Matthew* seems designed for church teaching and memorizing; that *Luke* has peculiar sympathies for the poorer classes of society, a superior talent for narration, and a readiness to accentuate the feminine elements of his epic story. These will appear to be innocent admissions. But these admissions open the door to the hypothesis (the hypothesis which we venture upon in the present study) that the Gospel system was the creation of groups, of a consensus of religious

enthusiasms, of many minds labouring to express a moral Utopia ; the creation, in effect, of an age ; each builder of the ethical fabric adding such thoughts, such parables, such sayings (*logoi*), as he felt would give force, beauty, and actuality ; the very obscurity of the Galilean teacher, the shortness of his career, the remoteness of his action from the great centres of Greek and Roman and Alexandrian culture, and the uncritical character of his immediate followers, rendering it all the easier to add large imaginations to slender biographical material. A pettifogging objector would cry out that it was impossible for a whole age and population knowingly to conspire in such a dramatic and poetic enterprise. Of course it was. These things are not done by such conscious mechanical process. They are done by the methods which gave us the Romulus and Numa of Rome ; the adventures of the Greek Ulysses ; the sorrows and glories of Æneas ; the exile and heroic achievements of Rama in India ; the much-tried fidelity of Sita, the queen of Hindu hearts ; the visions and legends of Mohammedan tradition ; the popular histories of Catholic saints ; the immortal tales of Arthur and Siegfried.

Nevertheless, consistently with this popular movement, and, indeed, in more or less obedience to its needs, the writers of the Synoptics (as of other such Gospels now existing only in fragments) would alter, curtail, expand, or transpose discourses and incidents and episodes. Take, for example, that centrepiece of Christian teaching, the Sermon on the Mount. The chief report of it is in *Matthew*. It is safe to say that no preacher, in the strict sense of the term (as distinct from a lecturer, a literary essayist, or a reader of ethical selections at a



church meeting), would ever deliver to a miscellaneous crowd of hearers on a country hillside such a condensed anthology of maxims and reflections. This recital of scattered moralities is not the method of a Francis, a Dominic, a Savonarola, a Massillon, a Chalmers, a Phillips Brooks, a Spurgeon :—

Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

The light of the body is the eye ; if, therefore, thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light ; but if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If, therefore, the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness !

No man can serve two masters ; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.

Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, etc.

The reader who will go through the Sermon on the Mount with attention will be able to put his finger on a very large number of abrupt transitions from topic to topic, natural enough in a thesaurus, or treasury, of golden counsels, but entirely unsuited to an open-air address to multitudes. Our foregoing notes on the style and contents of *Matthew* have prepared us for the view that this First Gospel has compiled, for church use or class study or private edification, a manual of good admonitions for the moral life, and idealized it by offering it as the very utterance of the Master at the outset of his mission. A comparison with *Luke* throws instructive light on this device. Here is *Luke's* account of the origin of the Lord's Prayer :—

As Jesus was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father who art in heaven, etc. (*xi*, 1, 2).

But when we turn to *Matthew* we find this very prayer embedded in the series of exhortations which make up the Sermon on the Mount. It is as if the compiler of the Sermon, anxious to bring together in a condensed form as many of Christ's teachings as possible, inserted the prayer without reference to the natural place and time of its first composition.

Again, there is a passage in *Luke* (ch. xvi) which gives the story of the Unjust Steward who made a squalid profit out of Mammon, and the story of the Rich Man whose worship of Mammon led to his descent into hell; and, between these parables, Jesus expresses his scorn of Mammon in a way that goads his critics:—

Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.

And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things; and they derided him.

And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before God, but God knoweth your hearts.

That at least provides a congruous setting for the maxim against the lust of money; but in *Matthew* the maxim is a mere detached aphorism.

Yet again, *Luke* tells us:—

Said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? and he said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able (xiii, 22, 23).

But in *Matthew* Jesus announces the Golden Rule ("Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them"), and immediately proceeds to speak of the Narrow Way to salvation—"Enter ye in at the strait gate."

Small details of language (Greek) betray the fact that in *Luke* the Sermon contains expressions which are peculiar to the writer of *Luke* himself.

For instance, "to do good" (Greek, *agathopoiein*), as in the following verses:—

If ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye?.....Love your enemies, and do good (vi, 33, 35).

Yet this Greek word never occurs in *Matthew* at all. But the most striking example of literary handling is the transformation of the Beatitudes. In *Luke* they run:—

Blessed be ye poor.....Blessed are ye that hunger now.  
.....Blessed are ye that weep now. [With corresponding woes following—namely, Woe unto you that are rich  
.....that are full.....that laugh] (vi, 20–25).

The Church manual of *Matthew* takes off the sharp economic edge of these words, and presents them, thus blunted and rendered didactic:—

Blessed are the poor in spirit.....Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness. [No corresponding woes follow] (v, 3, 6).

With such re-mouldings of tradition by the makers of stories for the moral instruction of the people, it would not be at all inharmonious to combine incidents and scenes from the mystery-dramas which fascinated and consoled popular audiences in the Roman Empire of those early centuries. Large numbers of Christian adherents would never possess, and could never read, a copy of the "Logoi" or "Memoirs," or other documents treasured by elders and bishops. They were content to listen uncritically to the reading, just as medieval villagers were content to accept the legends painted on the windows of a parish church, or carved on the west front of a cathedral.

But, as we pointed out in our consideration of the Fourth Gospel, social circles which had been trained in a more academic culture, and yet sympathized

with the Christian movement, would demand a Christ depicted in colours less crude, and detached from the associations of mere folklore. For the slave, the cottager, the peasant in the fields, or the shepherd reclining (as Virgil would have it) under the shade of the beech tree, this story would fit admirably :—

There were shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them ; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not ; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you, Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest (*Luke*, ii, 8-14).

But in the second-century theosophy of *John* all this machinery of the poet and folklorist dissolves, leaving “not a wrack behind,” and Christ enters upon the earthly stage thus :—

That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name ; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (i, 9-13.)

This contrast is apparent from beginning to end of the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics. Had the Christ of the Fourth Gospel been the only guise in which the doctrine of the union of Divinity and Humanity was published to Damascus, Alexandria, Ephesus, and Rome, the Christian religion would

have been the leisure-study of a clique, and never an evangel for the mass. But to accept this proposition is to allow, not merely such a simple conclusion as that the Gospel assumed a variety of literary forms, but that its evolution was as natural and human as the development of Athenian art, or the modern Parliamentary system, or the democracy of the United States. It did not arise with the announcement of a definite, recognized, and verifiable biography of Jesus the Christ. It evolved as dawn evolves; it grew as trees grow; it adapted itself to changing demands and ideals; it constructed; it yielded, it resisted, it compromised, it challenged; it contradicted itself, it recovered its balance, and it marched.

As the Gospel of *John* met the need of religious circles who wanted a philosophic Christ, the epistle called *Hebrews* met the need of religious circles (perhaps in Rome to begin with) who had what to-day we should call a sense of evolution. There were people who, though Gentile, had a certain admiration for the old Hebrew literature, and whose feeling for continuity was pleased by a supposed connection between Old Testament types and New Testament fulfilments. We can imagine an attentive audience in a Roman villa listening to the zealous and ingenious expositor who interpreted the ancient ritual as a foreshadowing of the great High Priest Jesus officiating in the spiritual temple :—

The first Covenant had ordinances of divine service and a worldly sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread, which is called the Sanctuary. And after the second veil the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All, which had the golden censer, and the

ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; and over it the cherubims of glory overshadowing the mercy seat; of which we cannot now speak particularly..... Christ is not entered into the Holy Places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us (ix, 1-5, 24).

The students of such a method of interpretation would experience the keen delight which those feel who believe they are in possession of a master-key of oracles, or explanations of long mysterious hieroglyphics. This reading of Christian meanings into Jewish ceremonies and priestly furniture would have little interest for the masses who loved the story of the Prodigal Son and the legend of the Resurrection; but it would appeal to pious minds with literary tastes; and the habit thus fostered by the early Church lasted well into the nineteenth century. The glory of scripture typology has now departed.

Except the book of *Acts*, nothing of consequence now remained to be incorporated in the literature destined to rank as the New Testament. The reception of this book as reliable history has caused immense confusion, not only in the conceptions of Christian origins held by churches, but in the conceptions framed by modern criticism; and particularly, as we have repeatedly said, in relation to the supposed trial of Paul before Governor Festus in 60-62, and his martyrdom (not, however, in any way hinted at in *Acts*) in 64. Of the author's capacity for graphic narration we have spoken appreciatively. He was the Defoe of the period, and, in some respects, the Walter Scott. Just as

in his Gospel (*Luke*) he had emphasized the idea of Jesus as a growing boy, and the new faith as an expanding mustard-tree, so in *Acts* he depicts the growth of the Christian idea through the Pentecostal gift of tongues, in spite of bigoted opposition from the Jews, in face of the jealousy of idol-makers (as at Ephesus), through the harmonious spirit testified by the community of goods (iv, 34), by the conversion of such Gentiles as the Ethiopian eunuch and Cornelius the Roman centurion, by the courtesies exhibited by Festus and Agrippa, and through the zeal of Peter on Jewish ground in co-operation with the zeal of Paul on Greek and Roman ground; and the final scene is nicely congruous with this dominant motive:—

Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him; preaching the Kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

Thus, as he remarks in the course of his story (xix, 20), "mightily grew the word of the Lord, and prevailed." We take it that towards the middle of the second century the writer was not only impressed by the signs of the development of the Christian movement in the Empire, but desired to convey that impression to others by means of a story which suggested victorious growth. It was a story of the open door, picturesquely represented in the legend of Peter's deliverance:—

Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains; and the keepers before the door kept the prison. And behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison; and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. And



the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. And he went out and followed him, and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision. When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of its own accord, and they went out and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him (xii, 6-10).

Masses of people who had no interest in the Logos doctrine, or the fulfilment of Old Testament types, or the discussions with Gnostics, would eagerly read or listen to this kind of religious novel, and would feel encouraged and edified, as Puritan England was by Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. Of course, parochial and disputatious intelligences can only treat this account of the author's object as the description of a fraud. But parochial and disputatious intelligences are incapable of understanding either the frame of mind which created the first Christian enthusiasm and faith, or the modern criticism which analyses and interprets the Christian psychology and history.

The New Testament canon was the climax of a long discussion, just as a programme issues from a modern congress; but this discussion extended over several centuries. An allusion to Paul's epistles in 2 *Peter* iii, 16, reveals the nature of the contest that often raged:—

In which [epistles] are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

A menacing temper appears in the demand of the author of the *Apocalypse*:—

If any man shall take away from the words of the

book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the Holy City (xxii, 19).

The irony of canonical fate, however, kept back this very book from Church recognition till the fourth century. And one Evangelist left room for other Gospels, of which later ages produced no inconsiderable store:—

There are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written (*John* xxi, 25).

Among such books might be named the *Aramaic Gospel according to the Hebrews* (of which but a few fragments remain), the *Gospel according to Peter*, the *Acts of Pilate* (also known as the *Gospel of Nicodemus*), the so-called *Protevangelium* (or *Book of James*), etc. The last-mentioned work contains popular stories of the infancy of Mary, and of the birth of her son, the Christ, in a cave at Bethlehem. Joseph her husband fetches a midwife, and then:—

They stood in the place of the cave, and behold, a luminous cloud overshadowed the cave. And the midwife said, My soul has been magnified this day, because mine eyes have seen strange things, because salvation has been brought forth to Israel. And immediately the cloud disappeared out of the cave, and a great light shone in the cave, so that the eyes could not bear it. And in a little that light gradually decreased, until the infant appeared, and went and took the breast from his mother Mary.

This third-century (or second-century) legend must be typical of a swarm of folk-tales which were current in the early Christian age, and which prompted *Luke* to say:—

Many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto

us which from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word (i, 1, 2).

We saw that even in the days of Eusebius, the Church historian (died 340), several documents were suspect; but the canon as now known was acknowledged at the Council of Carthage in 397.

Our survey concluded with a glance at Gnostic and other non-Biblical literature of the New Testament times. It is not difficult to understand why the Gnostic systems should have been ruled out of the canon, though they influenced the development of Christian ideas. They were too intricate, too cumbrous, and too abstract. But the indignation with which such writers as Irenæus stemmed their progress proved their widespread power. Incidentally, the agitation caused by the Gnostics illustrates the uncertainty of the Christian basis. Had the career and environment of Jesus been known through established, substantial, and amply detailed facts, there would have been little encouragement for the remarkable doctrine of the Gnostic Docetæ (namely, that Christ suffered on the Cross phantasmally, and not concretely), just as there would have been but a slender basis for the luxurious growth of popular legend. We observed, in our examination of the interesting and picturesque *Shepherd* of Hermas, that, though the writer says much about the Son of God and the Church, he never names either "Jesus" or "Christ." Nor does the epistle of Clement of Rome throw light on the personal incidents of the life of Jesus. Nor does Justin Martyr speak of Paul. Justin, indeed, cites no New Testament book by name except the *Apocalypse*. The Apology written by Aristides of Athens shows no trace of the

Pauline theology; and another Apology, composed by Athenagoras, alludes to the "Son," but not to "Jesus" or "Christ." The Epistle to Diognetus treats Christ as "the Truth and the holy and incomprehensible Logos." In short, the writers who dealt with the new Christian ideas and ideals pursued no common method, employed no common tests, and aimed at no common objective.

Nevertheless, the tendencies defined themselves with adequate clearness by the end of the second century. Negatively, the tendency led away from the far too involved, though sometimes poetic, speculations of the Gnostics. With some reluctance, but at last with moderate approval, the book of *Revelation* was admitted as a logical part of the Christian scheme; for, though Christ had not come to judgment as it threatened, its lurid portents might on occasion help to rouse the slothful believer or alarm the careless sinner. Doubtfully, also, the epistle of *James* was regarded; but it was finally felt that a practical moral life, if duly classed as "Christian," was a necessary element of religion, even though it needed the support of a theology. Such a theology was supplied by the teaching of Paul and the Pauline expositors. But, as we have over and over again intimated, the Pauline system rested on a minimum of biographical data. It did indeed require a Man, in whom the Divine Spirit should be incarnated; a Man whose union of the two natures, human and divine, was proved by the Resurrection; a Man who was to demonstrate the possibility of a holy, moral, and Godward life, lived in spontaneous sympathy with Christ, and not by servile obedience to a priestly "law." Beyond this, it was not concerned with the annals and

scenery of the career of Jesus ; such considerations, in fact, would have distracted the Pauline theology from its central ideal. But the instinct of the church-builders (if we so may term the makers of Christianity) added constituents which, for the mass of people, formed the essence of the new religion—namely, the pathetic and dramatic legend of the Son of Man who was born at the inn, baptized in the Jordan, entertained by Zacchæus the publican, hailed with Hosannas as he rode into Jerusalem, subjected to the agonies of Gethsemane and Calvary, and glorified in the ascension. Even the Gospel of *John*, pleasing as it was to a certain philosophic order of minds, would probably have been received with difficulty, had it not contributed some very striking episodes (the raising of Lazarus, the conversation with the Woman of Samaria, etc.) to the Master's biography. In the book of *Acts* a number of elements were combined—practical ethics, a popular theology, and narratives richly ornamented with marvels and adventures, and darkly threaded with dislike towards the old Judaism.

Meanwhile the meeting habit—illustrated in the Jewish synagogue, the assemblies at the Greek mysteries, the audiences at ritualist scenes connected with the cults of Mithra and Attis, the philosophic circles of Athens, Alexandria, and Rome, and the religious clubs maintained by a variety of social classes in the Empire—found a characteristic expression in the “*ekklesia*,” or church. A typical *ekklesia*, at which a president, a scripture-reader, and deacons officiate, is described in the pages of Justin Martyr ; and the three Pastoral Epistles, especially the so-called First

to *Timothy*, reveal the ecclesiastical structure of presbyters and bishops, and regulations for right doctrine and right discipline. Those Christians who longed for an assurance of continuity, and who, while dissatisfied with the rigid ordinances of Judaism, believed that faith to have been divine in its origin, were conciliated by the eloquent arguments of *Hebrews*, which linked up the ideal of the Jewish synagogue and priesthood with the ideal of the Christ as sacrifice, priest, pattern of conduct, and captain of salvation.

Thus were the foundations laid for the Church and priesthood of the Middle Ages; the theology which was to be so skilfully elaborated by St. Thomas Aquinas; the Bible authority which was to provide Protestantism with a battle-cry; and, unhappily, the anti-Jewish sentiment which resulted in so many barbarities in Christendom, medieval and modern. Thus was framed the creed which afforded stimulus to lofty spirits like Dante on the one hand, and which, on the other, satisfied the feudal aristocracy and their vassals and serfs. It was a creed which developed as slavery waned in the Roman Empire, but which could not lead the peasantry of the Middle Ages to a higher economic level than serfdom. The serf attended church, obeyed bishops and elders with a humility which would have won the approval of the writer of the Pastoral Epistles, believed in heaven, hell, and judgment as devoutly as the seer of the *Apocalypse*, and accepted the Gospel stories with an artless faith that would have pleased the authors of the Synoptics. In that peculiar and restricted sense, Christ reigned a thousand years.

Then a new age opened, more fateful and more

richly creative in feeling, thought, and action than that which struggled to birth in the four centuries 200 B.C. to 200 C.E. Contact with Mohammedan culture along the borders of European civilization affected the Western attitude to science, and placed a partial check on the belief in the universal efficiency of the Christian theology. Painting, architecture, and poetry, though retaining certain Christian colours and outlines, even in the Renaissance, yet indicated a freedom of spirit which inevitably led away from the medieval position. The printing-press widened the world of the mind, and the ships of Vasco da Gama and Columbus and other pioneers widened the world of land and sea. The tide of science set in; and no sooner had political liberty announced its advent in Europe and America than the first forewarnings of economic transformations and struggles were heard. Neither the intellectual resources and social influences of the Catholic Church nor the Biblical zeal and theological commentaries of Protestantism have been equal to these gigantic tasks and emergencies. When humanity marches, as it will march, gloriously and triumphantly, to the era of industrial reorganization and international peace, presided over by science and beauty, it will not march under the banner of the New Testament.



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GNOSTICISM (from Gk. *gnōstikos* = *gnastic*)  
A philosophic religious movement of  
pre-Christian times and later, having  
several forms, Pagan and Christian, all  
which were characterized by the central  
doctrine that emancipation came  
through knowledge - *gnosis* - the  
possession of which saved the soul  
from the clutch of matter.



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